The Book of PSALMS

INTRODUCTION

1. Title. The book of Psalms, or the Psalter, takes its English title from the LXX title of the collection, *Psalmoi*, the plural of *psalmos*, which designates a song to be sung to the musical accompaniment of stringed instruments. One manuscript has the title *Psalterion*, from which the word "Psalter" is derived. *Psalmos* is the Greek translation of the Heb. *mizmor*, a technical designation for many of the psalms. The root of *mizmor* is *zamar*, which means "to sing with instrumental accompaniment," or simply "to sing" or "to praise." In the Hebrew Bible the title of the book is *Tehillim*, "praises," and in rabbinical literature *Sepher Tehillim*, "book of praises." *Tehillim* is derived from the root *halal*, "to praise." *Halal* is familiar to English readers in the word *hallelujah*.

The Hebrews divided their sacred writings (our OT) into three divisions: the Law (*Torah*.), the Prophets (*Nebi'im*), and the Writings (*Kethubim*) (see Vol. I, p. 37). The division called Writings included the three poetical books, Psalms, Proverbs, and Job; the Five Rolls (*Megilloth*), The Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther; and the historical books of Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. Since Psalms was considered the most important of the Writings, that title was often made to stand for the group (by the figure of speech called synecdoche); thus the Hebrews frequently spoke of the three divisions of their sacred writings as "the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms" (see Luke 24:44).

2. Authorship. The psalms are the inspired productions of a number of authors, the whole collection having been brought together in its final form possibly by Ezra, Nehemiah, or some of the scribes immediately following their period. On the editorial activities of Ezra see EGW, Supplementary Material, on Ezra 7:6–10. Our oldest indications regarding the origin of the Psalter are represented in the titles, or superscriptions, that appear at the beginning of two thirds of the psalms. In the Hebrew these superscriptions appear as part of the text. Although these superscriptions are older than the LXX, many scholars believe that they were prefixed to the psalms after the original psalms were composed, and hence question their validity and authenticity. These scholars advance as their arguments: (1) that the origin of these superscriptions is uncertain; (2) that their contents are sometimes ambiguous or obscure; and (3) that it seems difficult to reconcile the content and style of some of the psalms with the statements or implications of the superscriptions.

The more conservative students of the psalms incline toward accepting the explicit statements of the superscriptions as authentic: (1) because their antiquity can be proved to go back to a time at least as early as the second century B.C. by their presence in the LXX (in fact they must have gone back to a time far preceding the date of that version, because the translators of the LXX did not understand many of the expressions); (2) because they have come down to us as a part of the Hebrew text itself; (3) because Hebrew lyrics from the earliest times had superscriptions attached to them; and (4) because the superscriptions provide certain helpful backgrounds for a fuller understanding of the

meaning and message of the psalms thus introduced. This commentary accepts the conservative point of view.

Eight names of persons occurring in the superscriptions to the psalms appear to be the names of authors, contributors, compilers, musicians, or others associated with the composition, compilation, and use of the sacred lyrics. The names are David, Asaph, Korah, Moses, Heman, Ethan, Solomon, and Jeduthun.

Foremost among these names is that of David. Although some moderns deny that David was the chief author of the book of Psalms and the principal contributor to the collection, many reasons may be given to substantiate the traditional belief. David was a poet and musician in his own right (1 Sam. 16:15–23; 2 Sam. 23:1; Amos 6:5). He was a man of deep affection, of outstanding magnanimity (2 Sam. 1:19–27; 3:33, 34), and of great faith and deep feeling, which found expression in enthusiastic worship of Jehovah. Under his wise and benevolent leadership music flourished in Israel. The capture of the heathen fortress, Jebus, and the enshrining of the ark upon the heights of Zion increased the importance of public worship and encouraged the composition of hymns and music for the sacred ritual.

David's acquaintance with the world of nature, his knowledge of the law, his tutelage in the school of adversity, of sorrow, and of temptation, his years of intimate fellowship with God, his colorful life as king in Israel, his assurance from God that He would raise up an everlasting King upon the throne of David—these experiences equipped the shepherd-king, the son of Jesse, to sing the sweetest and saddest songs of the human soul in its thirst for God. Moreover, references and allusions to the life of David and evidences of David's personality and craftsmanship abound in the psalms. The connection of David's name with the psalms, and with parts of psalms quoted in 2 Sam. 22 and 1 Chron. 16:1–36, constitutes strong support of authorship. The NT evidence in the use of David's name in Matt. 22:43–45; Mark 12:36, 37; Luke 20:42–44; Acts 2:25; 4:25; Rom. 4:6–8; 11:9, 10; Heb. 4:7 adds weight to the argument. The writings of Ellen G. White also provide substantial testimony (see PP 642–754; Ed 164, 165).

Seventy-three psalms carry in their superscription the phrase, "of David" (Heb. *ledawid*): 37 in Book One, 18 in Book Two, 1 in Book Three, 2 in Book Four, and 15 in Book Five (see p. 626 on the division of the psalms into books). These 73 psalms are commonly called the Davidic Collection. However, the expression *ledawid*, "of David," is not alone sufficient evidence for assigning authorship to David for the psalm in which the expression appears. The Hebrew preposition *le* expresses a number of relationships of which authorship is only one. At times *le* expresses the idea of "belonging to"; hence, *ledawid* could mean "belonging to the collection of." Nevertheless other evidence combines to show that David wrote at least many of these psalms. With reference to the use of the preposition *le* in connection with proper names, Barnes says: "Such a title does not imply, still less prove, that all the pieces in the collection come from the hand of David, but it does suggest that the outstanding one among the authors was the great king of Israel."

In the superscription of 12 psalms the phrase "of Asaph" (*le'asaph*) appears (Ps. 50, 73–83). As with the expression *ledawid*, *le'asaph* is not positive evidence of authorship.

Several of the psalms in this collection were apparently written by David (see Introductions to Ps. 73, 77, 80). Asaph was a Levite, one of David's choir leaders. Like David, Asaph was a seer and a musical composer (see 1 Chron. 6:39; 2 Chron. 29:30; Neh. 12:46). In the list of captives who returned to Jerusalem, the children of Asaph are the only singers mentioned (Ezra 2:41).

In the superscription of 11 psalms the phrase "for the sons of Korah" appears (Ps. 42, 44–49, 84, 85, 87, 88). The Hebrew word translated "for" is *le*, the preposition translated "of" in the phrase "a Psalm of David" (see p. 616). Korah's children escaped the punishment inflicted because of their father's rebellion against the authority of Moses (see Num. 16:1–35), and their descendants became leaders in the Temple worship (see 1 Chron. 6:22; 9:19).

One psalm (Ps. 88) designated "for the sons of Korah" is also designated "Maschil of Heman of Ezrahite." Heman was the son of Joel and grandson of Samuel (Heb. *Shemu'el*), a Kohathite of the tribe of Levi, and a leader in the Temple music (1 Chron. 6:33; 15:17; 16:41, 42).

The titles to three psalms (Ps. 39, 62, and 77) contain the name of Jeduthun, who was the head of a company of Temple musicians (see 1 Chron. 16:41, 42), and probably an arranger and compiler of Temple music. These titles, however, contain other names than that of Jeduthun, and it is probable that the three psalms were not written by Jeduthun but possibly were intended to be sung to tunes composed by him.

One psalm (Ps. 89) is entitled "Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite" (see 1 Kings 4:31).

In the titles to two psalms (Ps. 72, 127) the phrase "for Solomon [*lishlomoh*]" appears.

One psalm (Ps. 90) is entitled "A Prayer of Moses [*lemosheh*]."

About one third of the psalms bear no superscription whatsoever, and therefore are entirely anonymous (they are called orphan psalms). It has been conjectured that among the composers of the psalms were such other OT worthies as Ezra, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Haggai.

3. Historical Setting. Modern attempts to discover authorship and to date the psalms began about the middle of the 19th century, with a study of the references contained in the superscriptions. During the last hundred years scholars have placed the composition of the psalms over a span of more than a thousand years, beginning with Moses and ending with Alexander Jannaeus (d. 78 B.C.), with constant widening in the disparity of their views. Ewald (Eng. tr. 1880) allocated 13 psalms to the time of David, and considered most of the rest of the psalms postexilic. Cheyne (1888, 1891) allocated 16 psalms to pre-exilic times (chiefly during Josiah's reign) and considered all the rest postexilic—30 Maccabean. With the rise of higher criticism among Biblical scholars of this period, there was a general tendency to date only a few of the psalms as belonging to David and his times, while most of them were considered to be the product of postexilic times, chiefly the Persian and Greek periods, and some distinctly Maccabean. At the turn of the century, however, the general trend was to come to middle ground and date most of the psalms in the middle, or Persian, period. More recent knowledge of psalmody among the nations bordering on Israel has tended to date many of the psalms as pre-exilic; and the most recent archeological discoveries, especially the unearthing of the Ras Shamrah (Ugarit) tablets (from 1929 onward), have tended to prove that many of the psalms go

back to an early date in Palestinian history (see H. H. Rowley, ed., *The Old Testament and Modern Study*). Buttenwieser (1938) dates the psalms from Joshua to the Greek period, with none later than 312 B.C.

The conservative scholar generally holds that the psalms were composed against a historical background of a thousand years. Although many individual psalms cannot be placed definitely at any specific point in the history of the Hebrew people from Moses and David to the years immediately following the Exile, it may be safely concluded that the time of their composition lies within these bounds.

The hypotheses that seek to establish the authorship and date of many of the psalms are often highly ingenious and frequently interesting, but many of them are by no means conclusive. The reasons that have led many modern scholars to reject in whole or in part the authority of the superscriptions to the psalms have led to such differences of opinion that the matter is one of almost hopeless confusion. This commentary follows the plan that where authorship and historical background are certain or reasonable, these data appear in the introductory notes to the several psalms preceding the comment on the text itself. When the word "psalmist" is used in these notes, it does not always mean a specific composer, such as David or one of the Asaphites, or one of the Korahites, but may be employed to cover general authorship.

Even though the authorship and historical background of a number of the psalms is not known, this in no way hinders us from accepting the entire body of the Psalter as the product of men who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (Peter 1:21).

Among the notable finds of archeology in recent years, those that have made the greatest contribution to a better understanding of the psalms have come from the north Syrian site of Ras Shamrah, called Ugarit in ancient times. Excavations in this place, begun in 1929, have unearthed hundreds of clay tablets. These were written in a cuneiform script unknown at the time of their discovery, but which has since been deciphered, largely through the able efforts of Prof. Hans Bauer and P. Dhorme. The tablets contain mythological texts dealing with the religion of the ancient Canaanites (see Vol. I, pp. 128, 129). The study of these documents has become a special science called Ugaritic, a name that has also been given to the language and script in which these documents are written.

Ugaritic was a Canaanite dialect spoken by the population of northwestern Syria during the middle of the second millennium B.C. Because the Hebrew language varies but little from the ancient Canaanite, the Ugaritic religious literature has thrown much light on many obscure phrases and words of the Old Testament, especially of Psalms. The terminology and vocabulary of Ugaritic religious literature vary only slightly from those found in the Bible.

Besides throwing light on many obscure passages in Psalms, the study of the Ugaritic literature has also shown that the Biblical psalms are of much greater antiquity than many modern scholars were willing to admit. Numerous psalms that higher critics have dated in the Maccabean age have now been shown to contain phrases that were in common use in the second millennium B.C., but were not so in the Hellenistic period. This tends to substantiate the early dates suggested for many of the psalms by their respective titles.

However, the greatest contribution that Ugaritic has made with reference to the psalms is in the matter of vocabulary and phraseology. Many passages that were formerly obscure because the meaning of the words had been lost and could only be guessed at,

have now, through a study of Ugaritic equivalents, become clear and meaningful. In other cases the Ugaritic has confirmed the traditional understanding and translation of the text that is found in our English Bible.

Where the Ugaritic has made a substantial contribution to a better understanding of a certain text or word, this will be noted in the comments on the passages involved. In only a few exceptional cases will notice be made of the fact that the Ugaritic supports the traditional reading. The notes on Ugaritic owe much to the following scholars who have done pioneer work in demonstrating the bearing of Ugaritic on the study of Psalms: W. F. Albright, H. L. Ginsberg, C. H. Gordon, U. Cassuto, and J. H. Patton. The writer's indebtedness to the work of these men, and his gratitude, are herewith expressed.

4. Theme. Man is in trouble—God gives relief. This is the theme—universal in its appeal—of the book of Psalms. In these sacred poems we hear the cry, not only of the Hebrew, but of universal man, ascending to God for help, and see the hand of Omnipotence reaching down to bring relief. No wonder that for centuries, for Jew and Gentile alike, the Psalter has supplied material for private prayer and for public devotion; it has served with equal satisfaction as the formal liturgy for the Hebrew Temple and synagogue, as the hymnbook of the Christian church, and as the prayer book of the solitary child of God, regardless of race or creed.

The narrative of the use of the Psalter among the Hebrews is full of interest. The psalms early became the expression of the devotion of the people both in private life and in public worship.

A prominent part of worship in the Temple was the singing, or chanting, of psalms by antiphonal choirs, or by the choir and the congregation in responsive style. For this David set the pattern, in entrusting a psalm "to thank the Lord" into the hands of Asaph and his brethren when he brought the ark into the newly appointed tent in Jerusalem (see 1 Chron. 16:7–36). According to the Mishnah and the Talmud a psalm was assigned to each day of the week, to be sung after the daily sacrifice when the drink offering was being poured.

Special psalms were selected as suitable for the great feasts: Ps. 113–118 for Passover; Ps. 118 for Pentecost, Tabernacles, and the Dedication; Ps. 135 for the Passover; Ps. 30 for the Dedication; Ps. 81 for the New Moon, with Ps. 29 for the evening sacrifice on that day; and Ps. 120–134 for the first night of Tabernacles.

In the synagogue the daily prayers replaced the sacrifices of the Temple, the daily service being made to correspond as much as possible with that of the Temple. After the destruction of the Temple, the psalms were employed as prayers along with the reading of the Law and the Prophets, thus providing a constant communion with God in public worship. Special psalms came to be used for special occasions: Ps. 7 for Purim; Ps. 12 for the eighth day of Tabernacles; Ps. 47 for the New Year; Ps. 98 and 104 for the New Moon; Ps. 103 and 130 for Atonement. The people knew by heart the great hallels, or "hallelujahs": Ps. 104–106, 111–113, 115–117, 135, and 145–150, which were used as communal expressions of thanksgiving.

In the modern synagogue the use of the psalms varies according to the rite followed (Eastern European, Spanish–Portuguese, Yemenite, Italian, etc.), but the psalms have an honored place in all the rituals.

Likewise in the life of the orthodox Jew, from the first waking moment to the last moment before the night's rest begins, the psalms comprise a substantial part of the worshiper's daily prayers.

Christians have to a degree followed the pattern set by Judaism. Jesus of Nazareth quoted more frequently from Psalms and from Isaiah than from any other OT books. No other OT book is so frequently cited in the NT as the book of Psalms, with the possible exception of Isaiah. The early Christians incorporated psalms into their worship (see 1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; James 5:13) and the churches that followed continued the practice down through the centuries. Chrysostom (c. 347–407) attests the prevalence of psalms in all forms of worship. In the medieval church the clergy recited the whole Psalter weekly. It is said that St. Patrick recited the whole book of Psalms daily.

The psalms are a definite part of the Catholic ritual—both Roman and Eastern—and continue to hold a substantial place in the worship of both Anglican and evangelical branches of the Christian church, as current observation and experience confirm.

In the treatment of the theme of man's trouble and God's relief, the psalms draw their materials from the personal and national life of a people who experienced much of sorrow and joy, of frustration and fruition, of disappointment and satisfaction; from the reactions of a people who felt deeply the poignancy of their experiences and expressed themselves with emotional freedom. The psalms, therefore, reflect almost every experience possible to finite man, and give expression to practically every human emotion. Says Ellen G. White: "The psalms of David pass through the whole range of experience, from the depths of conscious guilt and self-condemnation to the loftiest faith and the most exalted communing with God" (PP 754). They are concerned with sickness and recovery, sin and forgiveness, sorrow and comfort, weakness and strength, evanescence and permanency, futility and purposefulness.

There are psalms for every mood, for every need: psalms for the disappointed, for the discouraged, for the aged, for the despairing, for the sick, for the sinner; and psalms for the youthful, for the vigorous, for the hopeful, for the faithful, believing child of God, for the triumphant saint. There is a psalm with scarcely a note of hope in its overtone of dejection; and, on the other hand, there is a psalm of praise that breathes not a single word of petition. There are psalms in which the sinner tarries "in the secret" of God's "presence" "under the shadow" of His "wings" and pours out his soul alone; and there are psalms in which the saint of God joins the vast assembly of worshipers in the great congregation, and, to the accompaniment of all manner of instruments, shouts aloud the praise of God. And throughout the whole collection, God is exalted as the solution to all man's problems, the ultimate All in all: our hope, our confidence, our strength, our triumph—incarnate in the Messiah, whose coming brings redemption and ushers in the universal and eternal reign of righteousness. Christ moves through the psalms; in them we catch prophetic glimpses of His deity (Ps. 45:6; 110:1), Sonship (Ps. 2:7), incarnation (Ps. 40:6, 7), priesthood (Ps. 110:4), betrayal (Ps. 41:9), rejection (Ps. 118:22), resurrection (Ps. 16:9, 10), and ascension (Ps. 68:18). "The golden key of the Psalter lies in a Pierced Hand" (Alexander).

Among the many phases of development in the psalmist's treatment of his grand theme, the following statements are suggested as of special importance:

1. The devout soul can imagine no greater blessing than to be in the presence of God, no greater calamity than to be shut away from His presence.

2. The God who is the creator and sovereign-ruler of the universe is at the same time the loving father of His children, the tender shepherd of His human sheep.
3. Real religion is an intensely joyous experience, abounding in all manner of expression, requiring the consecration of all human values to the praise of God. "I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart" (Ps. 9:1).
4. Petition and thanksgiving should go hand in hand. Prayer and praise are partners. When the psalmist asks God for a blessing, he praises Him for the abundance of His blessings and thanks Him for the blessing as if it were already received.
5. The contemplation of nature always leads the devout soul to the praise of God as Creator—it is never an end in itself.
6. Since the history of God's people shows that God has blessed them abundantly in the past, it may be confidently expected that He will continue to bless them now and in the future.
7. Righteousness—rightdoing—ultimately has its rewards. In general, the devout life on earth is eminently more satisfactory than the way of the worldling; and ultimately it yields eternal satisfaction. Conversely, wickedness—wrongdoing—brings suffering and ultimate death. Although the wicked appear to prosper for a time, the justice of God's government will ultimately show the folly of their way and give them the logical result of their wickedness.
8. It is the privilege and responsibility of the child of God to share his experience with others. The apparent nationalism of some of the psalms gives way in others to the psalmist's recognition of the church universal.
9. Trouble, pain, and sickness are part of God's redemptive plan, to be accepted as instruction and warning. All life's problems will be solved ultimately in the coming of Messiah and the establishment of His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.
10. In God's government, "mercy and truth are met together" (Ps. 85:10)—the law and the gospel are joined in perfect union.

For the expression of the vast theme of Psalms in its many phases, the psalmists chose the literary form of lyric poetry as the fittest means of expressing man's deepest insights and highest aspirations in his desire for fellowship with God. The psalms are "the perfection of lyric poetry" (Moulton). But to the casual reader, accustomed to the metrical forms of English poetry, the psalms do not present the appearance of poetry. In them he does not find the regularly recurring accent and the rhyme that constitute the typical metrical features of much of the poetry of the Western languages. Hebrew poetry, which comes to its point of highest excellence in Psalms, is entirely different in nature from the poetry of the West. Its rhythm does not consist in a regular recurrence of accented and unaccented syllables, with rhyme at ends of lines and sometimes within the lines, as in much English poetry. It appears that accent occurring irregularly is a feature of the form of Hebrew poetry, but its nature is challenging scholarship and is not fully understood (see p. 27). The infrequent appearance of similar sounds at the ends of adjacent verses does not necessarily give evidence of rhyming design on the part of the poet. Neither of these elements appears in the common English translations. Significantly, the metrical basis of Hebrew poetry, in common with that of other languages of the Near East, is much more elastic than the metrical basis of conventional English poetry. It is so elastic as to reveal in its inner structure the development and relationship of the component thoughts of the over-all composition.

The significant feature of Hebrew poetry is the rhythm of thought called parallelism, or balanced structure, the setting of line against line in a variety of patterns. This peculiar structure has been likened to the ebb and flow of the tide, and, in the language of a German writer, to "the heaving and sinking of the troubled heart." There is something about it that transcends nationality. It seems to be indigenous to the human heart. And the Bible reader may take satisfaction in the fact that this Oriental metrical form loses little if any of its validity and beauty in the English of the KJV, as he grows used to recurrence of phrase after phrase, marshaled according to a wide range of variations in balance.

Parallelism is of three primary kinds:

1. Synonymous parallelism, in which the thought is repeated immediately in different words and images in the succeeding line, the two lines forming a couplet of unified ideas; for example,

"The sorrows of hell compassed me about:
the snares of death prevented me" (Ps. 18:5).
"Cast me not off in the time of old age;
forsake me not when my strength faileth" (Ps. 71:9).

2. Antithetical parallelism, in which the thought is contrasted or reversed in the succeeding line; two thoughts are set over against each other; for example,

"I am as a wonder unto many;
but thou art my strong refuge" (Ps. 71:7).
"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses:
but we will remember the name of the Lord our God" (Ps. 20:7).

3. Synthetic parallelism, in which the second member of the couplet adds a thought akin to that of the first member, or completes the thought of the first member; for example,

"I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised:
so shall I be saved from mine enemies" (Ps. 18:3).
"For as the heaven is high above the earth,
so great is his mercy toward them that fear him" (Ps. 103:11).

This use of parallelism has numerous intricate developments, which are explained more in detail in the article, "The Poetry of the Bible," pp. 24–27.

Although this thought rhythm, or parallelism, appears to some extent in the KJV, the prose form in which that version is printed tends to obscure the poetic structure. Therefore, in this commentary the text is printed in the customary typographical form of English verse in an endeavor to represent to some degree the metrical basis of the psalms.

5. Outline.

A. Classification. Many classifications of the psalms according to subject matter and purpose have been offered. Barnes recognized five types: (1) Hymns in Praise of God, (2) National Hymns of the Hebrews, (3) Temple Songs, (4) Psalms on the Themes of National and Individual Trial and Calamity, and (5) Religious and Moral Psalms. Kent listed the following types: (1) Love and Marriage, (2) Praise and Thanksgiving, (3) Adoration and Trust, (4) Prayer, and (5) Reflective and Didactic. MacFayden arranged the psalms according to eleven topics: (1) Adoration, (2) Jehovah's Universal Reign, (3) The King, (4) Reflection, (5) Thanksgiving, (6) Worship, (7) History, (8) Imprecation, (9) Penitence, (10) Petition, and (11) Alphabetical.

Based upon his study of literary compositions in the form of religious lyrics not only in Israel and Judah but also in the early and contemporary cultures of the adjacent Near Eastern peoples, Gunkel found five types: (1) Hymns, including Songs of Zion and Enthronement Psalms, (2) Communal Laments, (3) Royal Psalms, (4) Individual

Laments, and (5) Individual Songs of Thanksgiving, with a group of psalms which he calls Mixed Psalms. Classifying according to literary form and purpose, Moulton designated the psalms as (1) Prefatory, (2) Dramatic Monologues, (3) Acrostic Psalms, (4) Dramatic Anthems, (5) Anthems for the Inauguration of Jerusalem, (6) Liturgies, (7) Festal Hymns, (8) Votive Hymns, (9) Litanies, (10) National Elegies, (11) Occasional Hymns, and (12) Festal Anthems.

For the purpose of this commentary the following classification, with notes by way of definition and typical examples of each class, will serve to show the variety of ideas and inclusiveness of theme in the Psalter:

a. Nature. Ps. 8, 19, 29, 104. The Hebrews, living close to the land, were lovers of nature. However, their love of nature was never an end in itself, but always pointed to nature's God and led them to extol the power and majesty of the Creator. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem, "Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni," is an outstanding example of this Hebraic treatment of nature in English literature. In it the poet's contemplation of nature leads to praise of God.

b. Historical and National. Ps. 46, 68, 79, 105, 106, 114. From the rich experiences of the past, depressing or exhilarating as they might have been, the Hebrew psalmists drew warnings with respect to daily conduct and inspiration for the future. Their loyalty to God was ever the focal point of their patriotism. It was He who furnished the inspiration needed in time of national crisis.

c. Didactic. Ps. 1, 15, 34, 71. The psalms abound in moral, ethical, and religious counsel.

d. Messianic. Ps. 2, 22, 69, 72, 110. The Messiah is presented in His divine character and human descent, in His humility and exaltation, in His suffering and glory, in His priestly service and royal dignity, and in the ultimate triumph and blessedness of His eternal reign. The NT picture of Christ as Prophet, Priest, Redeemer, and King is forecast in the Psalter. It has been said that a systematic treatise on the Messiah could almost be compiled from Psalms. It need hardly be added that to say there are Messianic psalms is also to say that there are prophetic psalms. David was not only a sweet singer, he was also a prophet (Acts 2:29, 30).

e. Penitential. Ps. 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143. David stands out as one of the great confessors in the Bible. Vigorously sinning, he as vigorously renounced his sin, falling in sorrow and contrition at the feet of his Saviour. It is significant that of the seven penitential psalms five are attributed to the poet-king, who, when faced with the prophet's parable of the ewe lamb, immediately confessed, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Sam. 12:1–13).

f. Imprecatory. Ps. 35, 52, 69, 83, 109. A number of psalms denounce the enemies of God and His people and bring down curses upon their heads. The tone of these psalms seems contrary to the spirit that Christ declared should govern our attitude toward an enemy (Matt. 5:44). The following suggestions, of varying value, offered by a wide range of expositors, may help collectively to throw light on the problem:

1. The expression of denunciation may be understood as predictive rather than imperative. The punishment is foreseen by the psalmist; it does not come in response to his petition. The verbs of imprecation may be considered statements of warning rather than expressions of desire.
2. The concreteness of Hebrew thought and expression tended to associate sin and the sinner as one. The Hebrew mind found it difficult to harbor the abstract idea of sin except

as he saw it personified in the sinner. Sin and the sinner were not separate entities, but inseparable concomitants. To destroy the sin, demanded the destruction of the sinner.

3. Recognizing their role as God's chosen representatives among the heathen, the Hebrews considered an attack made against them by the heathen to be a sin against God, and felt obligated to inflict punishment for such an attack. The psalmist is conscious of being anointed of God. When he speaks, he speaks for God. When the enemy persecutes him, he is persecuting God. In this connection it may be noted that Moses, in the impassioned intensity of the oratorical discourse of Deuteronomy, sometimes turns from using the third person pronoun, and, without transition or explanatory phrase, speaks, as it were, directly from the mouth of God (see Deut. 11:13–15; 29:5, 6). The psalmist wrote under divine inspiration, and thus had the right not only to denounce sin but to pronounce judgment against the sinner. With these imprecations against the enemy may be compared the maledictions against the Israelites themselves for falling into sin, as recorded in Lev. 26, Deut 27 and 28, the denunciations of Isa. 5:24, 25; 8:14, 15; Jer. 6:21; 7:32–34, the strong language used by Jesus in denouncing the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 23), and the words of the NT writers in Acts 5:3, 9; Gal. 1:8, 9; 5:12; James 5:1–3. As these references indicate, the imprecations of the Bible are not confined to the psalms, nor even to the OT. They are found in the NT as well.
4. The denunciations of the sinner must be understood against the background of the times in which they were written. In those days men expressed themselves in strong terms and with vigorous imagery. The Bible writers set forth their ideas in human language and in a style familiar to men. "The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible" (EGW MS 24, 1886).

g. Prayer, Praise, and Adoration. Ps. 16, 55, 65, 86, 89, 90, 95–100, 103, 104, 107, 142, 143, 145–150. The psalmist's voice is continually heard in prayer: "I cried unto the Lord" (Ps. 3:4), "Hear my prayer, O Lord" (Ps. 39:12); and in praise and adoration: "I will extol thee, my God, O king" (Ps. 145:1), "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name" (Ps. 103:1). All the experiences of life are lifted above their setting and made the subject of praise.

h. Pilgrim. Ps. 120–134. Essentially folk songs, called "A Song of degrees" in the superscription. These songs were perhaps sung by pilgrims on their way to the great feasts in Jerusalem.

In the Hebrew these psalms are called *shir hamma'aloth* (Ps. 121 is designated *shir lamma'aloth*). *Ma'alah* comes from the root *'alah*, which means "to go up." *Ma'alah* is used of the ascent or return home from Babylon (Ezra 7:9), of "steps" or "stairs" (Ex. 20:26; 1 Kings 10:19), and of "steps of a sundial" (2 Kings 20:9). In the title to these psalms, *ma'alah* possibly refers to the pilgrimages to the feasts at Jerusalem (cf. its use in Ezra 7:9). The Mishnah refers to a traditional use of these 15 psalms in the Temple as follows: "Holy men … repeated songs and praises … and Levites stood with harps upon the fifteen steps which go down from the court of Israel to the court of women, corresponding in number with the fifteen songs of Maaloth which are in the book of Psalms." Tradition also affirms that these psalms were sung by the Levites during the all-night feast of the first night of Tabernacles on the 15 steps between the Court of Israel

and the Court of the Women, while the Court of the Women was brilliantly illuminated with candelabra.

i. Alphabetic, or Acrostic, Psalms. Ps. 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145 in the Hebrew text reveal an alphabetical succession in initial letters of verses, unrecognized in the ordinary English translations, except in part in the KJV of Ps. 119, where the Hebrew letter appears at the beginning of each stanza. The acrostic psalms are of three kinds:

1. Those in which the first letter of each verse is a letter of the alphabet in order (Ps. 25, 34, 111, 112, 145, with a few minor exceptions in Ps. 25 and 34).
2. Those in which the letters of the alphabet begin alternate verses (Ps. 37) or occur at the beginning of verses at wider intervals in the psalm (Ps. 9 and 10).
3. The psalm (119) which is divided into 22 stanzas of 8 verses each, each line of each stanza beginning with the same letter of the alphabet, the stanzas proceeding in the normal order of the alphabet.

This acrostic device was employed doubtless to aid the memory of the reader, thus anticipating our modern ABC books by more than 2,000 years. The acrostic psalms, as a rule, do not show active development of theme, but rather repetition in different words and with varied illustrations. Stylistically, they are characterized by richness of expression.

In this commentary the acrostic nature of the psalms in poetic form is indicated by letters of the Hebrew alphabet in the margin. The 22 letters of the alphabet are listed in order on p. 14.

B. Arrangement. Since very early times the book of Psalms has been divided into five books, possibly in imitation of the five books of Moses. Commenting on Ps. 1, the Midrash says: "Moses gave the Israelites the five books of the Law, and to correspond to these David gave them the Book of Psalms in five books." This fivefold division, which is probably older than the LXX, is indicated by the insertion of doxologies and "Amens" at the close of each book, except Book Five, which, as an expanded and climatic doxology, serves as a conclusion to the whole Psalter.

These major divisions are as follows:

Book One, Ps. 1–41, closing with a doxology and double "Amen" (Ps. 41:13).

Book Two, Ps. 42–72, closing with a double doxology, double "Amen," and the inscription "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended" (Ps. 72:18–20).

Book Three, Ps. 73–89, closing, as Book One, with a doxology and double "Amen" (Ps. 89:52).

Book Four, Ps. 90–106, closing with a doxology, an "Amen," and a hallelujah ("Praise ye the Lord," Ps. 106:48).

Book Five, Ps. 107–150, closing with Ps. 150, which begins and closes with a hallelujah ("Praise ye the Lord"), and is itself an extended hallelujah.

Within the body of the Psalms, in addition to the Davidic, Asaphic, and Korahite collections referred to above, several other collections appear as minor psalters.

Ps. 51–72 are called The Prayers of David the Son of Jesse (see Ps. 72:20). Ps. 52–55 are a collection of maschils (see p. 628); Ps. 56–60, of michtams (see p. 627); Ps. 57–59, of al-taschiths (see p. 629). Ps. 113–118 constitute the Egyptian Hallel, so-called from the first phrase in Ps. 114: "When Israel went out of Egypt." Jewish tradition has it that the Egyptian Hallel was used as part of the Passover ritual in the Temple. The several psalms of the collection, it is said, were sung while the vessels containing the blood of the

Passover lambs were being passed up and down the rows of priests, on its way to be poured out at the foot of the altar by the ministering priest. The people joined orally in the ceremony, shouting Hallelujah and repeating certain verses of the psalms at intervals. Ps. 119 may be regarded as a collection of 22 short psalms, forming an ingenious acrostic meditation on the law. Ps. 120–134 are called Songs of Degrees, and are a collection of pilgrim folk songs (see p. 625). Ps. 145–150 constitute a final magnificent Hallelujah Chorus. The devout soul is offered an array of psalters within the Psalter.

In referring to verses in Psalms, by the customary method of textual reference, one must note the text or version to which he is referring, for the numbering of the verses varies in several texts and versions. Special attention is called to the textual numbering of the Hebrew text, the KJV, and the RSV, as compared with the textual numbering of the Greek LXX, the Latin Vulgate, and the English Douay Version.

The English Bible (KJV, RSV, etc.), following the Hebrew, numbers 150 psalms. The LXX numbers 151 psalms and the Vulgate 150 psalms, but these versions are numbered differently. They combine Ps. 9 and 10 into one psalm, and likewise Ps. 114 and 115; and divide Ps. 116 into two psalms: Ps. 116:1–9; Ps. 116:10–19; and Ps. 147 into two psalms: Ps. 147:1–11, Ps. 147:12–20. Thus, only Ps. 1–9 and 148–150 are numbered the same in the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Latin. Except for Ps. 9, 10, 114–116, and 147, in the remaining psalms the Hebrew numbering is higher by one than that of the LXX and Vulgate. It is important to recognize this difference in numbering when one cites references to the LXX or the Vulgate. This difference in numbering the several psalms appears in the following table:

Hebrew, KJV, RSV	LXX, Vulgate, Douay
Ps. 1-8	Ps. 1-8
9, 10	9
11-113	10-112
114, 115	113
116:1-9	114
116:10-9	115
117-146	116-145
147:1-11	146
147:12-20	147
148-150	148-150
	151 (in LXX only)

Moreover, in the Hebrew text, the title or superscription of a psalm constitutes v. 1, in whole or in part. This requires further care in citing verse references from the Hebrew text. For example, Ps. 4:1 (KJV) is Ps. 4:2 in the Hebrew, the superscription being numbered v. 1. The Hebrew text of Ps. 4 therefore has nine verses instead of eight verses as in the KJV.

C. Superscriptions. See also pp. 615–617. The superscriptions of the psalms designate psalm collections, psalm types, musical melodies, instrumental accompaniment, and facts of authorship and occasion.

a. Collections. References in the superscriptions of many of the psalms to David, to Asaph and the sons of Asaph, and to the sons of Korah, seem to indicate smaller collections of psalms within the Psalter of 150 psalms. There are 73 psalms in the Davidic Collection,

12 in the Asaphic Collection, and 11 in the Korahite Collection. The superscriptions to 55 of the psalms contain the phrase "To the chief Musician," Heb. *lamnaṣṣeach*; "To the choirmaster" (RSV), as if this collection were dedicated or entrusted to the "overseer" of the choir (see 2 Chron. 2:2, 18; 34:13 for the use of *menaṣṣeach* as "overseer"). *Lamnaṣṣeach* is translated "to the chief singer" (KJV), "to the choirmaster" (RSV), in Hab. 3:19. Some suggest the definition "for liturgical purposes."

b. Types. Key words or phrases in the superscriptions of numerous psalms seem to indicate the nature or type of the psalm thus introduced. They are as follows:

1. Psalm. Heb. *mizmor*, a song to be sung to the accompaniment of stringed instruments. It occurs in the superscriptions of 57 psalms, always qualified with other words, as "of David." *Mizmor* comes from the root *zamar*, meaning "to sing," "to praise," "to play an instrument." The LXX translates *mizmor* by *psalmos* (from *psallein*, "to pluck").
2. Song. Heb. *shir*. This word appears in the superscription of 29 psalms. In the superscription of Ps. 18, the word "song" is translated from *shirah*, the feminine form of *shir*. The phrase "A song of loves" (KJV), "a love song" (RSV), introduces Ps. 45. In the superscriptions of Ps. 120–134 the word "song" is followed by the phrase "of degrees" (see p. 625).
3. Michtam. A transliteration of the Heb. *miktam*. This word appears in the superscriptions of six psalms (16, 56–60). Its meaning is unknown. One conjecture derives the word from an Akkadian root, *katamu*, "to cover," and suggests that the psalms so designated may be considered atonement psalms, that is, psalms concerned with the covering up of sins. The word may be a musical title.
4. Maschil. A transliteration of the Heb. *maśkil*, derived from the root *śakal*, "to be prudent." Its presence in the superscriptions of 13 psalms (32, 42, 44, 45, 52–55, 74, 78, 88, 89, and 142) seems to indicate that these psalms are instructional or didactic poems. *Maśkil* is translated "with understanding" in Ps. 47:7. Since, however, the idea of instruction, rigorously applied, does not suit all of these psalms, *maśkil* may indicate a kind of musical performance.
5. Prayer. Heb. *tephillah*. This word appears in the superscriptions of Ps. 17, 86, 90, 102, and 142 (see Hab. 3:1).
6. Praise. Heb. *tehillah*. This words occurs in the superscription of Ps. 145, its only appearance in a superscription in the Psalter. A masculine plural form *tehillim* is the Hebrew title of the whole collection (see p. 615).
7. Shiggaion. Heb. *shiggayon*. This word appears in the superscription of Ps. 7 (and elsewhere in the plural, in Hab. 3:1). Its meaning is uncertain. It has been explained as meaning an irregular ode of wild and impassioned nature. The Heb. root word is probably *shagah*, "to wander," "to stray," "to stagger," suggesting ecstatic rhythm with frequent change.

8. To teach. Heb. *lelammed*. The phrase occurs in the superscription of Ps. 60 and suggests that the psalm was intended for teaching purposes. Perhaps the Levites were entrusted with the responsibility of teaching it to the people.
9. To bring to remembrance. Heb. *lehazkir*. The phrase appears in the superscription of Ps. 38 and 70. From the Heb. *'azkarah*, "offering of incense," some have conjectured that this phrase indicates that these psalms were intended to be sung while that part of the sacrificial service took place. In 1 Chron. 16:4 the word "record," "invoke" (RSV), is translated from Heb. *lehazkir*.
10. Of praise. Heb. *lethodah*. This phrase appears in the superscription of Ps. 100. Possibly this psalm was intended to be sung at the time of the thank offering (Lev. 7:11–15). Ps. 100 is a psalm of thanksgiving.

c. Melodies. Several phrases in the superscriptions suggest melodies to accompany the psalms, probably tunes well known in their original use. Popular melodies may have been adapted to public worship.

1. Muth-labben (Ps. 9). Its meaning is uncertain. Some Hebrew manuscripts combine *'al*, translated "upon" (KJV), with *muth*, thus yielding the word *'almuth*. But even this combination remains an unexplained technical note. The LXX follows this combination and translates the phrase, *'almuth labben*, "concerning the hidden things of the son." Some suggest that the phrase is the title or first phrase of a tune and translate it "Die for the son."
2. Shoshannim (Ps. 45 and 69). Literally, "lilies," probably the title or key word of a melody. The superscription of Ps. 60 includes the phrase "Shushaneduth," literally, "lily of witness," and the superscription of Ps. 80 "Shoshannim-Eduth," literally, "lilies, the witness." Perhaps these phrases all suggested the same well-known love tunes. The lily is the anemone of Palestine. Or, Eduth may be a place name.
3. Aijeleth Shahar (Ps. 22). Literally, "the doe [of a fallow deer] of the dawn." "The Hind of the Dawn" (RSV). According to the Targums this psalm was sung during the offering of the lamb at the time of morning sacrifice, but how early this custom was introduced is not known.
4. Jonath-elem-rechokim (Ps. 56). The meaning of this phrase is unknown. By conjecturally emending the text, reading *'alim* for *'elem*, the RSV translates the expression, "The Dove on Far-off Terebinths." Some suggest that there may be a quotation from, or a reference to, the song cited in Ps. 55:6, 7. Others suggest an allusion to David's years of wandering.
5. Al-taschith (Ps. 57–59, 75). Literally, "Do not destroy." Possibly the first words of the vintage song quoted in part in Isa. 65:8.

d. Several phrases in the superscriptions seem to indicate the kind of orchestral instruments used to accompany the singing or chanting of the psalms.

1. On Neginoth (Ps. 4, 6, 54, 55, 67, 76). Probably meaning, "with stringed instruments" (RSV). The word is used in the singular in the superscription of Ps. 61. *Neginoth* is rendered "stringed instruments" in Isa. 38:20 and Hab. 3:19. The Hebrews had three

kinds of stringed instruments, the harp (Heb. *nebel*), the lyre (Heb. *kinnor*), and the zither (Heb. *'aśor*). On these instruments see pp. 33–37.

2. On Nehiloth (Ps. 5). Probably meaning, "for the flutes" (RSV).
3. Upon Sheminith (Ps. 6, 12). A phrase of uncertain meaning. The marginal reading "upon the eighth" found in some editions of the KJV, if "eighth" is intended to refer to the octave, is meaningless, for there is no evidence that the Hebrews knew the octave. In 1 Chron. 15:21 the phrase is used in connection with harps. Josephus says that the harp (Heb. *nebel*) had eight strings.
4. Upon Gittith (Ps. 8, 81, 84). A musical term the exact meaning of which is unknown. Jewish tradition says that it refers to a harp that David brought from Gath. The form of the word may imply "after the Gittite manner," that is, in a manner borrowed from the Gittites, as we speak of music in the Italian manner, or in the Chinese mode, etc. But probably a better meaning derives from the Heb. *gath*, "wine press," in which case "upon Gittith" may possibly refer to a vintage melody.
5. Upon Alamoth (Ps. 46). The meaning of the phrase is unknown. The translation "for the maidens" (established by Aquila and Jerome) appears improbable, for women apparently took no part in the Temple services. In 1 Chron. 15:20 the phrase appears in connection with psalteries. Possibly the harps were to be tuned to follow the lead of the lyres.
6. Upon Mahalath (Ps. 53, 88). The meaning is uncertain, although the suggestion that the psalm is to be sung in a sad, mournful manner is consonant with the mood of these psalms, especially the latter, identified by some as the darkest in the Psalter.

e. Authorship and Occasion. The superscriptions of 14 of the psalms (3, 7, 18, 30, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 142) refer to episodes or circumstances in the life of David. For a discussion of these superscriptions see p. 617 and the introductions to the several psalms.

D. Selah A transliteration of the Heb. *selah*. This word appears 71 times in the Psalter: 17 times in Book One, 30 times in Book Two, 20 times in Book Three, and 4 times in Book Five. There are no occurrences in Book Four. *Selah* appears in only 39 of the 150 psalms; 28 of these psalms have for their superscription "To the chief Musician." The word is of uncertain meaning and has been variously interpreted to indicate a pause in the reading, an interlude for stringed instruments, a change of melody, emphasis (like "Amen"), etc. The LXX renders the term *diapsalma* ("interlude"), suggesting a musical notice in the liturgical redaction of the psalm. Despite many conjectures, the word is of doubtful signification. "Selah" occurs within psalms of a distinctly hymnlike nature, and usually appears at the close of a section of thought.

BOOK ONE

PSALM 1

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 1, one of the didactic, or wisdom, psalms (see p. 623), akin to the gnomic poetry of Proverbs, constitutes (along with Ps. 2) an introduction to the entire book of Psalms, and especially to Book One of the Psalter. As such, it has been called the "Threshold Psalm." Because of the absence of title or other superscription, and the consequent absence of an external clue as to authorship or occasion of writing, the psalm

is known as an "orphan" psalm. The content of the psalm may fittingly give it the title, "The Two Ways."

The psalm is a brief poetic expression of the spiritual law, occurring frequently in Psalms, that righteousness succeeds and unrighteousness fails. It is an OT sermon on the happiness of the man who lives a life wholly consecrated to God, and the utter destruction awaiting the man who leaves God out of his life. This belief is a certitude in Ps. 1; it is not a problem to be grappled with as is the case in certain other psalms.

As carefully wrought as a sonnet, this introductory psalm is divided into two contrasting stanzas. Verses 1–3 describe the happiness of the good man, deliberately avoiding evil and as deliberately avowing his delight in God's law; and vividly portray the results of the good life by comparing the good man to a tree, producing the fruits of righteousness. Verses 4–6 describe the unhappiness of the evil man under the figure of the chaff, state the outcome of such a life, and conclude that God is concerned with the ultimate success of the good man, whereas the end of the bad man is destruction.

1. Blessed. Heb. *'ashre*, used 25 times in Psalms; translated "blessed" 19 times and "happy" 6 times. In the present use its force seems to be that of an interjection: "O the happiness of the man!" Happiness comprehends material and spiritual blessings, both of which come as a result of following God's way. The word "blessed," used in the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3–11), is a translation of the same word [Gr. *makarios*] that is used in the LXX to translate the "blessed" of Ps. 1. The book of Psalms begins with a beatitude and ends with a hallelujah (see Ps. 150).

Walketh, … standeth, … sitteth. The three words portray in climactic order the successive steps in a life of evil: (1) going in the general direction of those who are alien to God, conforming to worldly customs (see 4T 587); (2) stopping to associate with rebels under the spell of sin, dallying with temptation; (3) definitely joining the group of sinners, settling down in disregard of light. A rabbi said: "If two sit together and no words of Torah [law] are spoken between them, they are a session of scoffers, of whom it is said: '[A good man] doth not sit in the company of scoffers.'"

The godly man's life is first described in negatives. He avoids associating with evil-doers, to avoid contamination with evil. He says No to wrong. In his life there are certain restraints.

Ungodly. Heb. *resha'im*, a common term for godlessness as opposed to *ṣedeq*, "righteousness." It suggests willful, persistent violation of God's commands.

Sinners. Heb. *chaṭṭa'im*, from the root *chaṭa'*, "to miss the mark," either ignorantly or from lack of moral fiber.

Seat of the scornful. The godly man will not be found in the company of those who, deliberately choosing evil, find pleasure in exercising their baleful influence on others.

This verse is a typical example of synthetic parallelism (see p. 24).

2. Delight. Heb. *chepheṣ*, a word used of both "pleasure" and "desire." It appears that Coverdale's edition of the Bible (16th century) endeavored to combine these two ideas in his translation "longing delight." The life of the godly man is now described by positives (see v. 1). The true saint says Yes to righteousness. He finds constant pleasure in reflecting on God's law. His study of God's Word is habitual and regular; it is not

irksome. The psalmist's personal experience of delight is expressed in Ps. 119:16, 35, 47; etc.

Law. Heb. *torah*, meaning basically "instruction," or "precept"; then "command," or "law," in the usual sense of the word. In general, *torah* signifies the written revelation of God's will.

Meditate. Heb. *hagah*, literally, "to mutter," from which have sprung the ideas "to read in an undertone," "to soliloquize," "to meditate." The psalmist's personal experience in meditation is expressed in Ps. 119:15, 148, though here a synonym of *hagah* is employed (see also MH 503, 504; 4T 539). Compare Moses' advice to Israel in the second of his farewell addresses (Deut. 6:6–9), and God's counsel to Joshua at the beginning of his career (Joshua 1:8). With such preoccupation of mind it is no wonder that the godly man experiences the results depicted in Ps. 1:3. There is no better way to fill the hours of a sleepless night than by meditating on God's Word (see Ps. 17:3; Ps. 42:8; 119:55; etc.).

3. Like a tree. In the figure of a fruit-bearing tree (not merely an ornamental tree) the psalmist shows the results of the godly life. Similar imagery is found in Jer. 17:8.

Planted. The figure suggests purposefulness. The tree is set in a favorable place and carefully cultivated.

Rivers. Heb. *pelagim*, indicating irrigation ditches, artificial watercourses, further suggesting the care bestowed on the tree (see Eze. 31:3, 4).

Bringeth forth. The imperfect tense of the Hebrew verb implies repeated action.

Shall not wither. There are three blessings vouchsafed the godly man as a result of his devotion to God's Word: (1) he lives a useful life, producing the fruits of the Spirit (see Gal. 5:22, 23; Heb. 12:11); (2) he is perennially fresh and vigorous (Ps. 92:12, 13); (3) he ultimately succeeds in his endeavors. As the tree is rooted in the solid earth and draws its moisture from the ever-flowing stream, so the godly man sends his roots and derives sustenance from the water springs of salvation. He is steadfast, fixed, anchored. Thus, though he may be assailed by trouble and temptation, he stands firm; and the greater the trial, the deeper the root, and the stronger his hold on God.

Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. Or, "In all that he doeth he shall prosper." In whatever enterprise the good man engages, he prospers. Regardless of the success or failure of the undertaking, his trust in God empowers him to draw life from the eternal Source and ultimately to reach his goal.

4. Not so. In the LXX the idea is emphasized by a double negative. This version reads, "Not so the ungodly, not so."

Like the chaff. In the figure of the chaff, the psalmist shows the result of a life of wickedness. Similar imagery is found in Job 21:18 and Isa. 17:13. In contrast to a tree, the chaff has no root, no fixed place. Dead, dry, helpless, it is at the mercy of the elements. The ungodly are attached to nothing; they lack stability and cannot endure. In Palestine grain was threshed on a flat, exposed piece of ground, often on a wind-swept hill. The precious kernel remained while the chaff was carried away. Had the psalmist lived in certain other parts of the world, he might have employed the figure of the tumbleweed.

Driveth away. There is a paradox in the use of the two figures of speech. Outwardly, the tree appears to be held prisoner; in reality, it is free, grows, and bears fruit. Outwardly, the chaff appears to be free; in reality, it is a slave to environment. The Christian, attached to God, his source of life and strength, grows and produces fruit; the chaff, unattached, cut off from its source of strength, produces nothing. It has a freedom not worth possessing. Compare Jesus' figure of the two houses (Matt. 7:24–27).

5. Shall not stand. This will be especially true in the last judgment when the wicked are separated from the righteous at the end of their respective ways (see Matt. 25:31–46).

6. The Lord knoweth. God concerns Himself with the righteous. Therefore, they prosper. The last verse of the psalm gives the final reason for the different endings of the two ways. Since God knows, He discriminates, and He approves or condemns according to the eternal standards.

"One lesson and only one history may be said to repeat with distinctness: that the world is built somehow on moral foundations; that in the long run it is well with the good: in the long run it is ill with the wicked" (Froude quoted in Soncino, on the Psalms).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 TM 90; 2T 711; 3T 58; 4T 587
1–3GC 478; 8T 328
2 CSW 44; ML 50; 4T 526; 5T 220
3 CH 368; GW 115; ML 50; 4T 539; 5T 423
4 5T 81

PSALM 2

INTRODUCTION.—The first of the Messiah psalms, Ps. 2, has been appropriately called a Song of the Lord's Anointed. Ps. 1 and 2 have a complementary relationship. As Ps. 1 celebrates the blessedness of the good man's life of meditation on God's law and the ultimate failure of the wicked, so Ps. 2 shows the futility of universal rebellion against the Lord and the blessedness of peoples that put their trust in the Son of God. Ps. 1 describes the two ways for individuals; Ps. 2, the two ways for peoples. Ps. 1 begins with a beatitude; Ps. 2 closes with one. "Man proposes, God disposes" may well be given as the theme of Ps. 2. That Ps. 2 has Messianic import is attested in Acts 4:25–27 (see DA 778).

Structurally, the psalm falls into four portions, each stanza containing almost the same number of words. The first stanza (vs. 1–3) presents a picture of the high and mighty of earth defying the Ruler of the universe and His Messiah; the second stanza (vs. 4–6), in a contrasting picture, shows the Lord's disdain for their taunts and establishes Messiah as King in Zion. The third stanza (vs. 7–9) represents the Son of God contemplating the decree that made Him the legal owner of the world; the fourth stanza (vs. 10–12) advises submission to the Lord's Anointed. A blessing concludes the psalm (v. 12).

That David is the author of Ps. 2 is attested in Acts 4:25. It is noteworthy that the early church designated the psalm "the second psalm" (Acts 13:33).

In his oratorio *The Messiah,* Part the Second, Handel used vs. 1–4, 9 of Ps. 2 as words in the air for bass, chorus, and recitative and air for tenor, immediately preceding the Hallelujah Chorus.

1. Why do the heathen? The psalm begins abruptly with a picture of violent confusion. The word for "heathen" means properly "nations"; it was applied to the

idolatrous nations surrounding Israel. Luther paraphrased the question of the psalmist thus: "How can they succeed, who set themselves against Jehovah and against His Christ?"

Rage. Heb. *ragash*. This word occurs only here (the Aramaic form is found in Dan. 6:6, 11, 15) and means "to be in tumult."

The people. According to the laws of Hebrew parallelism, the word expresses the same idea as "the heathen."

Imagine. Heb. *hagah* (see on Ps. 1:2). These sinner deliberate on something that cannot be accomplished. All their purposes against God's government are certain to fail.

2. The kings of the earth. The phrase gives a specific form to the generalization of v. 1. "Kings" stands in opposition to "my king" of v. 6. The attitude expressed in "set themselves" is that of determined resistance.

Anointed. Heb. *mashiach*, from which we get the word "Messiah." It signifies literally, "an anointed one." *Mashiach* is twice translated "Messiah" (Dan. 9:25, 26). According to the ancient custom, oil was poured upon the heads of priests and kings when these officials were being consecrated to their work (see Ex. 28:41; 1 Sam. 10:1). David frequently referred to Saul as "the Lord's anointed" (1 Sam. 24:6 10; 26:9; etc.). That the psalm has Messianic import is evident from Acts 4:25–27; see also Matt. 26:63; John 1:49; Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4; Col. 1:18; Heb. 1:2–5.

3. Break their bands. The rebels against God are represented as speaking out, expressing their desire to break the restraints imposed by Jehovah's authority. Instead of describing the action, the poet represents the rebels defiantly declaring their intentions.

4. Shall laugh. In contrast to the tumultuous picture of the nations, Jehovah is pictured sitting calmly, serenely, in the heavens (see Ed 173; MH 417), laughing at the vain attempts of the rebels. Overruling Providence crosses the designs of men of corrupt hearts and turns their course into foolishness (see 2 Sam. 15:31). God is conceived of, or in figure described, as possessing human attributes: He will "laugh" (see Ps. 37:13; 59:8; etc.). The Talmud says: "The Torah [law] speaks in the language of the children of men." The inspired writer expresses the characteristics and attitudes of Deity in the language of human beings, so that men may understand. Compare Ellen G. White's inability to express the glories of heaven because she could not use "the language of Canaan" (EW 19). The idea suggested in "laugh" is further expressed by the words "derision," "wrath," and "displeasure" (vs. 4, 5)—all of which indicate the divine contempt for rebellion.

5. Then shall he speak. God's seeming indifference will not last forever. The word "then" implies that God will eventually declare His purpose.

6. Yet have I set my king. "Yet" is the translation of the Hebrew conjunction generally translated "and," but which here has the force of introducing a quotation. The pronoun "I" is emphatic, and is contrasted sharply with "them" (v. 5) referring to those who conspire against Jehovah.

My holy hill of Zion. See Ps. 48:2. Zion, the name of the southern hill in the city of Jerusalem, becomes its poetical name.

7. I will declare. Jesus, the Anointed One, the Word, God's spokesman, speaks in turn, interpreting God's great declaration of His Sonship. He is no usurper; He holds His office as Messiah by His Father's decree. This decree implies (1) that Jesus is to be

acknowledged as the Son of God, and (2) that His reign is to be universal (vs. 8–9; cf. Eze. 21:27).

My Son. See Heb. 1:2, 5; cf. Matt. 14:33; 16:16; Acts 8:37; 1 John 4:15.

Begotten thee. This statement must not be construed as implying an original generation of the Son. "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived" (DA 530). The Bible is its own best interpreter. Inspired writers must be permitted to make the precise application of OT prophecies. All other applications are human opinion, and as such lack a plain "Thus saith the Lord" (see on Deut. 18:15). The inspired apostle's comment on the prophecy of this text makes the psalmist's words a prediction of the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 13:30–33). The resurrection from the dead in a unique way proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God (Rom. 1:4).

8. Ask of me. The relation between Jehovah and the Messiah is such that any request of the Son would be granted. The utter futility of any attempt of the rebels to overthrow the government of the Anointed One is emphasized. As heir, the Son inherits all things, and is thus able to share them with us as heirs together with Him (see on Rom. 8:17).

9. Rod of iron. Symbolic of the scepter of rulership, Messiah's enemies will completely subdued.

Dash them in pieces. Compare Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15.

10. Be wise now. Two ways lie before the rebels: either to continue rebellion, which will produce destruction, or to submit to the divine will, which will mean eternal happiness. The psalmist, as a brother pleading with his fellows, solemnly exhorts the leaders of the rebellion to submit. It is foolish to rebel.

Be instructed. Literally, "be admonished," "be disciplined." The leaders are advised to recognize their duty to Jehovah and His Messiah, and to lend their influence to promoting it.

11. With fear. This phrase and the phrase "with trembling" suggest humble reverence mingled with awe in the realization of the awful consequences of rebellion against the purposes of God. The word "rejoice" implies that there is joy in the worship of God.

12. Kiss the Son. That is, do reverence to the Messiah, whom Jehovah has declared to be His Son. The word "kiss" suggests the Oriental custom of paying respect to persons of superior rank (see 1 Sam. 10:1). The psalmist advises those who would rebel against the Messiah, to recognize Him as King and to submit to His reign (see John 5:23).

Though the translation "kiss the Son" represents an entirely natural rendering of the Hebrew, the versions, both ancient and modern, show varieties of renderings. The LXX translates the clause, "lay hold of instruction," which is also the reading of the Vulgate. These translations appear to be based on the Jewish definition of the word for "son," here not the Heb. *ben*, but the Aramaic *bar*, which the Jews, after the Exile, applied also to the admonitions of the Torah. The word for "kiss," *nashaq*, also means "to join" (see Eze. 3:13, where *nashaq* is translated "touched"). The combination of the two ideas produces the translation of the LXX. Instead of "kiss" several versions read "do homage" (Moffatt, Ray, the translation of the Jewish Publication Society of America). "Do homage" is simply an interpretive rendering of the word for "kiss."

Although the early church attributed Ps. 2 to David (Acts 4:25), critical scholars have usually dated the psalm in the post-exilic period. They advance as their argument the fact that the Heb. *ben* and the Aramaic *bar*, both meaning "son," appear interchangeably in

the psalm. This argument is no longer valid. The same two words are used interchangeably in a Ugaritic letter of the 14th century B.C. This shows clearly that the presence of Aramaic words in any Biblical book is no evidence for a late origin.

The translation of the RSV, "kiss his feet," is based on a reconstruction of the Hebrew text involving a rearrangement of a number of the letters of the text. In the light of the fact that the Hebrew text as it stands is easily translatable and yields a rendering contextually sound, the suggested change is so drastic that it must be rejected. For a full discussion of the translation problems of this text see *Problems in Bible Translation,* pp. 144–147.

Perish from the way. In the light of infinite love (John 3:16), God's wrath must eventually blaze forth against sin and consume those who refuse to accept the Messiah. But God's heart of love yearns for the salvation of Israel (see Eze. 18:30, 31), and He has no pleasure in the destruction of sinners (v. 32).

Blessed are all they. The psalm closes with a beatitude pronounced upon all who trust in Jehovah's King. All men, of all ages, climes, and nations, have sinned and need a Saviour. Blessed are they who recognize their need and put their trust in the Messiah. It is the Christian's solemn duty to appeal to men to repent of their sins and submit to the rule of Jesus, God's Anointed Son. Ps. 2 has been called The Messiah's Missionary Hymn.

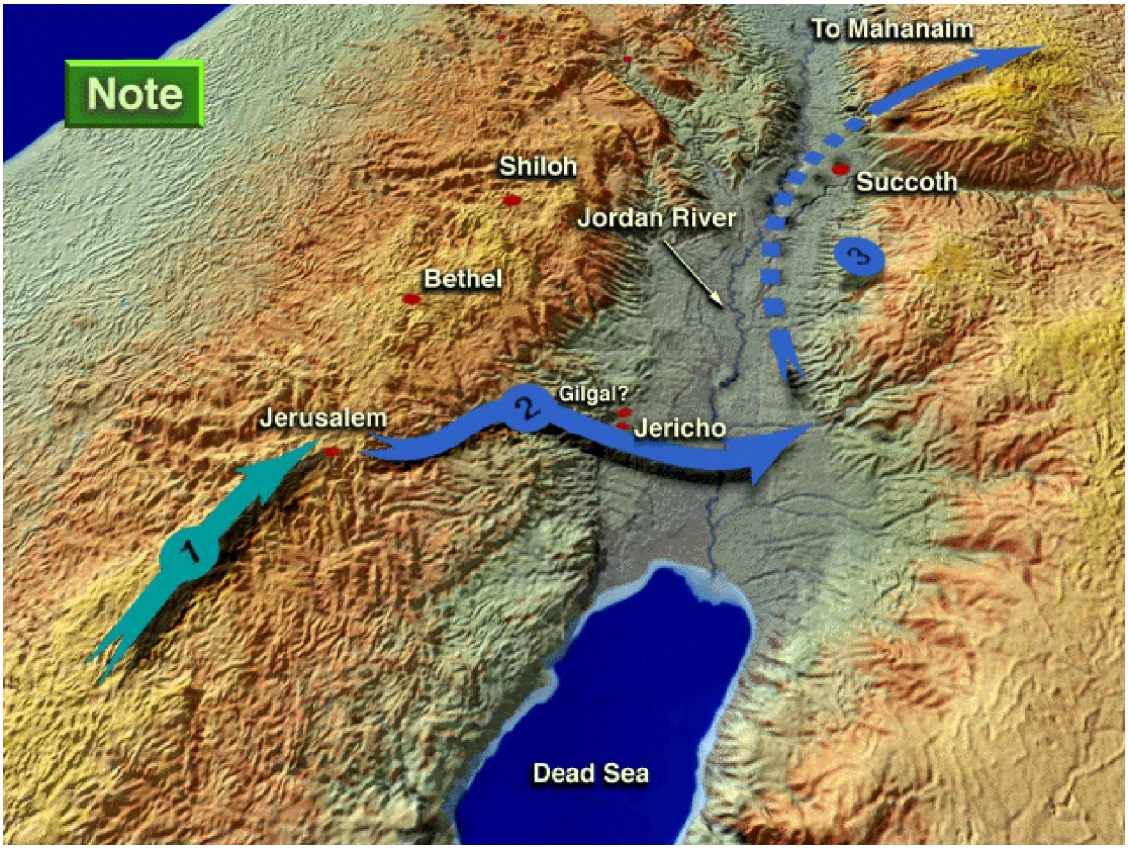
ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–4DA 778
4 PP 739
12 DA 414

Divine Solace in Times of Unjust Oppression

[1]

[1]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



After a day of fear resulting from mob violence led by a traitor son, a hasty leaving of home and long-established order, a tiresome flight through sparsely settled woods, an attempted night encampment beside the bed of a swift-flowing stream, a sudden summons for immediate flight, a night crossing of the stream—them came the morning song, not of dejection, but of praise. Victory in such moments comes only through confidence in God's care. Psalms 3
[2]

Historical background for 2 Samuel 15–17.

PSALM 3

INTRODUCTION.—According to the superscription, Ps. 3 was composed by David when he fled from Absalom his son. "Spent with grief and the weariness of his flight, he with his company had tarried beside the Jordan for a few hours' rest. He was awakened by the summons to immediate flight. In the darkness the passage of the deep and swift-flowing stream must be made by that whole company of men, women, and little children; for hard after them were the forces of the traitor-son" (Ed 164, 165). In the hours of darkest trial, David sang this sublime hymn of trust in God in the face of the enemy (see PP 741, 742). The psalm has been termed A Morning Prayer. It is the cry of the soul in the presence of danger; of trouble relieved by the passing of the night. It is closely related to Ps. 4, An Evening Prayer, which may be considered its sequel. There are four stanzas:

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[2]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

(1) the present danger (vs. 1, 2), (2) the recollection of help in the past (vs. 3, 4), (3) the sense of security in the midst of the present danger (vs. 5, 6), and (4) the prayer for triumph over enemies (v. 7). An exclamation of confidence with a prayer for God's blessing on His people, concludes the poem (v. 8). In the midst of the poem there is a sudden dramatic change from the weariness and depression of the night to the trust and triumphant faith of the new morning. It is said that the Huguenots in Condé's army during the French religious wars sang this psalm at the time of relieving the sentry.

For the historical narrative see Sam. 15–17. On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. How are they increased! Absalom had a large following. Nearly all Israel had revolted (see 2 Sam. 15–17, especially 15:6, 13; see also PP 727–745).

That rise up against me. Similar to the expression used by the Cushite who brought the tidings to David of the failure of Absalom's defection (see 2 Sam. 18:31, 32).

2. Soul. Heb. *nephesh*, here, as frequently in the psalms, an idiom for the personal pronoun. "Which say of my soul" is equivalent to saying "which say of me."

No help for him. So desperate is David's condition that his enemies present the situation as beyond the help of God (see Ps. 71:10, 11).

Selah. See p. 629. In this psalm "Selah" appears to mark a division between stanzas.

3. For me. Or, "round about me." God had assured Abraham that He would be his shield (Gen. 15:1; cf. Deut. 33:29; 2 Sam. 22:3; Ps. 28:7; 119:114).

The lifter up. When David fled, he was bowed under his humiliation (2 Sam. 15:30). Now God enables him again to hold up his head. (see Ps. 27:6).

4. I cried. The form of the Hebrew verb thus translated frequently expresses repeated, habitual acts. The verse may thus be understood as observing that whenever David cries to God, God answers. "Prayer changes things."

His holy hill. Zion (see on Ps. 2:6). David had removed the ark to the sacred city, and it was natural that he should regard that fortress as the peculiar dwelling place of God. The Heb. *har*, "hill," should preferably be rendered "mount." In Ugaritic literature (see p. 618) "holy mount" often designates the heavenly abode of their deity (see Isa. 14:13).

5. I laid me down. The pronoun "I" is emphatic. David represents himself as in danger of attack at any moment during the night, hunted and cursed by his enemies, nevertheless able to lie down in peace and sleep, so great was his trust in God. Since everything was in God's hands, he had a sense of complete protection. His sleep was not mere weariness or indolence or presumption; it was an act of faith. Internal calm nerved him for the next day's fight.

The Lord sustained me. The first waking thought is one of recognition that God had honored the trust placed in Him, even as his last thought on going to sleep had been one of complete confidence. The psalmist is strengthened to meet the needs of the day. The last thoughts of the night are often the first thoughts of the day. Note the sudden dramatic change from depression to triumph. Such is the benediction of the night and the promise of the new day (see Lam. 3:22, 23).

6. Ten thousand. With God as his helper, David was undismayed at the numerical advantage of his foes (see Ps. 27:3; cf. Deut. 32:30).

7. Arise. God is called to come to the psalmist's help. Compare Israel's watch-word when the camp set forward (Num. 10:35; cf. Ps. 68:1; 132:8).

Thou hast smitten. The Hebrew verb form here may be regarded as a perfect of certainty or a prophetic perfect. In the former, events that are confidently expected are

conceived and described as having taken place. The latter describes a future event as having actually happened. The psalmist expresses his confidence that God will crush his enemies; the result is here regarded as an accomplished fact.

8. Unto the Lord. The psalmist makes no claim that he can save himself. To the enemy who mockingly asserts, "There is no help for him in God," David replies, in effect, "To God alone belongs my help, at all times and under all circumstances."

Upon thy people. In his magnanimity David turns his thoughts away from himself and his own peril to the condition of his people, his nation, not only those who had remained faithful to him, but those who had revolted. What a sublime ending to a hymn of trust!

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–8PP 742
4–8Ed 165
8 PK 269

PSALM 4

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 4 has been termed An Evening Prayer and has been considered a sequel to Ps. 3. At eventide the psalmist reviews the troubles of the day, and is satisfied. A sense of sweet peace and tranquility takes possession of him, for he realizes that, as God has been his support in the hours of distress, He will keep him through the night. It has been suggested that Ps. 5 also should be read together with Ps. 4, for Ps. 4 is a prayer appropriate to evening devotions and Ps. 5 is a petition appropriate to the period of morning worship. The same tone appears to pervade both psalms.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 629.

1. Hear me. Literally, "answer me," implying an expected, favorable answer.

God of my righteousness. This expression is not found elsewhere in the OT.

Thou hast enlarged me. Literally, "in narrowness Thou hast made large room for me." Formerly hemmed in by his pursuers, the psalmist now feels freedom to move about.

Have mercy upon me. Or, "be gracious unto me." Almost every word of this verse in Hebrew ends with the vowel *i,* pronounced *ee,* possibly as if to express a long-drawn-out cry.

2. Sons of men. Heb. *bene 'ish*. The more common expression thus translated is *bene 'adam*, which indicates mankind in general. By contrast *bene 'ish* may possibly refer to distinguished people. David turns from his prayer to God, to address his persecutors as if they were present.

My glory into shame. If this refers to the rebellion in Absalom's time (see introductions to Ps. 3 and 4), the allusion most obviously would be to the fact that David was being robbed of his kingly dignity and reduced to virtual beggary and extreme want.

Leasing. Heb. *kazab*, "a lie." "Leasing" is Old English for "lie." The rebels were following a course that must eventually prove to be only a delusion; it must utterly fail. The promises that enduring happiness can be attained by material pleasure and worldly ambition must prove false; they are but a lie.

Selah. See p. 629.

3. But know. Since Jehovah has set apart the psalmist for a special work, the efforts of his enemies to thwart that purpose must come to nought.

Godly. Heb. *chasid*, one who shows his love to God by his pious manner of life (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

The Lord will hear. Since he is godly and accordingly is faithfully carrying out the service to which God has appointed him, he is assured that God will hear him and deliver him. Here is real ground for confidence: if the Christian is faithfully carrying out God's plan for him, he may expect God to uphold him until he has completed the work that Heaven designs for him to do.

4. Stand in awe. Heb. *ragaz*, literally, "tremble," "be perturbed." The enemies (v. 2) are admonished to tremble at the consideration of the results of their rebellious course, and accordingly to desist.

Sin not. Do not continue to sin by persisting in your nefarious designs.

Commune with your own heart. Literally, "speak with your own heart." Today we might say, "consult your better judgment"; or, "appeal to your better nature, your better feelings, your innate sense of right, your generous emotions, rather than rely upon your intellect, your will, or your passions."

Be still. "It is only in standing water that silt settles, and in quiet nights that dew distills. In the night, when the eye is closed to all the world besides, let it be opened to self-examination" (F. B. Meyer). In the quiet of the night, when one is alone and only the eye of God looks upon him, man is free to consider his plans in the light of God's approval, and to come to valid conclusions. Herein lies a prescription for mental unrest, and a recipe for sinners (see Job 33:14–17).

Selah. See p. 629.

5. Sacrifices of righteousness. Sacrifices prompted by right motives out of a sincere heart (see Deut. 33:19; Ps. 51:19) as opposed to vain oblations (see Isa. 1:13; Jer. 6:20; Micah 6:7, 8).

6. There be many that say. The general inquiry among men is, "Who will show us any good? Where can real happiness be found? What *is* real happiness?" These are the cynical questions of the godless materialist. They are answered only in the life of the devout follower of God (see Ps. 16:11).

Lord, lift thou up. Compare the words of the Aaronic blessing (Num. 6:26). In contrast with the plans of his enemies, the psalmist desires only the favor of God—this is the supreme good. The true child of God finds durable satisfaction, not in the material things and sensual delights of the world, but in the consciousness that he has heaven's approval as he enjoys fellowship with God.

7. Gladness in my heart. Not the so-called happiness of things and worldly possessions, but the happiness set forth in v. 6, the happiness of basking in God's smile. This gladness is greater than the gladness of farmers who rejoice in the plentiful harvest. Among the Hebrews, as among most people, the time of the harvest was a time for special rejoicing.

Corn. Heb. *dagan*, "grains in general." *Dagan* must not be confused with Indian maize. The principal grain crops of Palestine were wheat, barley, spelt, and millet. The expression "corn and wine" seems to have been used at times for the entire agricultural crop of the fields.

Wine. Heb. *tirosh*, literally, "new wine," as the word is translated in Isa. 65:8.

8. Both. Literally, "together," or "at the same time." Since the psalmist's mind is at peace, he can lie down and sleep calmly. Confidence in God gives assurance of sleep. The two go hand in hand. This condition is the counterpart of the experience described in Ps. 3:5, in which the psalmist, in the morning, reflected that God had permitted him to sleep, although fearful enemies surrounded him; now, in the evening, he goes a step further and lies down serenely in the consciousness that, although he is still surrounded by his enemies, God will give him the gift of quiet and restful sleep (see Prov. 3:24).

Dwell in safety. The psalmist expresses his realization that to God alone he is indebted for his safety through the night. What confidence: to know that he will be kept safely, and to recognize that he owes this safekeeping entirely to his God. The Christian who shares the confidence of the psalmist need have no fear during either the slumbers of the night or the duties of the day. The thought of v. 8 is the keynote of 121.

There is a suggestion that as a part of public worship this psalm may have been sung in the Temple as follows: vs. 1–4 during the preparation for sacrifice; vs. 5, 6 during the offering; vs. 7, 8 after the sacrifice as an assurance of acceptance.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4 MYP 122; 7T 251

PSALM 5

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 5 is a morning prayer, written in the same spirit as Ps. 4, an evening prayer. The circumstances under which the two psalms were written were probably similar. After a night of calm sleep the psalmist utters this prayer before entering God's house (v. 7). He is confident that God, who will not allow wicked men to prevail, will surely cause those who trust in Him to have fullness of joy. The psalm begins with prayer to God, then expresses unwavering confidence in God, pleads for God's guidance in life's perplexities, and finally, exhorts all to put their trust in God.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627, 629.

1. Meditation. The psalmist prays that God may regard not only his words but their intent, the secret and unexpressed desires of his heart. The word for "meditation," *hagig*, is found only here and in Ps. 39:3, where it is translated "musing." It seems to indicate "groaning," or "a sigh." By *hagig* the psalmist may have referred to what Paul called *stenagmoi*, "groanings" (Rom. 8:26). "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, unuttered or expressed."

2. My King, and my God. It is noteworthy that David, a king, should acknowledge his subjection to the King of kings, his God. "God" is here a translation of *'Elohim* (see Vol. 1, pp. 170, 171). The psalmist recognizes the omnipotence of God. Ugaritic literature shows many examples of the designation "king" for *'el*.

3. In the morning. The psalmist lifts his voice in prayer regularly, morning by morning, but especially at this time, when he is beset by his enemies (see Ps. 55:17; 59:16; 88:13). There is no better habit than the habit of morning prayer, when alone with God the soul prepares to discharge the duties and meet the problems of the unknown day.

"A moment in the morning—a moment, if no more—
Is better than an hour when the trying day is o'er."

It is well to cultivate the habit of offering the first fruits of our consciousness as a morning offering to God.

Direct. Heb. *'arak*, literally, "set in order." The word is used for the arranging of the wood upon the altar in Gen. 22:9 and of the arranging of the shewbread on the table (Ex. 40:23). The psalmist's prayer is a sort of well-arranged morning sacrifice; it is not performed thoughtlessly.

Look up. The psalmist looks upward for a token of God's favor, for the answer to his prayer. Compare the Saviour's injunction to "watch and pray" (Matt. 26:41).

4. Pleasure in wickedness. God is too holy and pure to have any part in furthering the designs of wicked men. If He showed favor to them, it would be like His admitting them to His dwelling.

Dwell. Heb. *gur*, literally, "sojourn." Evil is personified as if capable of dwelling in a habitation. Those who may dwell with God are described in Ps. 15.

5. The foolish. Heb. *holelim*, "boasters," the proud, the insolent, sinners.

Shall not stand. God will not approve of the cause of the boasters (see Ps. 1:5). He hates all forms of iniquity; in the psalms, "workers of iniquity" are continually referred to as the concrete embodiment of the principle of evil.

6. Leasing. See on Ps. 4:2. This Old English word for "lie" is found only in these two verses in the KJV.

Abhor. God holds sin in such abomination that He cannot overlook its presence in the sinner. Those whom God abhors are literally "men of bloods and deceit." The plural form "bloods" refers to bloodguiltiness or murder (see Gen. 4:10). David's enemies are distinguished for fraud and murder.

7. But as for me. A strong contrast. Unlike the wicked, the psalmist feels calm assurance upon entering God's house. It is his right.

Multitude of thy mercy. The child of God is as welcome in God's house as the wicked man's presence would be unwelcome there. He is sure of God's hospitality. This is truly a childlike trust in a heavenly Parent.

Fear. This expression implies profound reverence in worship.

Worship. Literally, "prostrate myself." The worshipers were not permitted to enter the sanctuary, but, near or far, prostrated themselves toward it as the dwelling place of God.

Temple. Heb. *hekal*, a palace as in Isa. 39:7; Dan. 1:4; or a temple where God may dwell. *Hekal* is used to designate the tabernacle that preceded the building of the Temple (1 Sam. 1:9; 3:3; 2 Sam. 22:7), as well as the Solomonic Temple (2 Kings 18:16; 23:4; etc.). The use of the word *hekal* in this verse, therefore, is no argument, as certain critics maintain, that the psalm is of post-Davidic origin. Note also that in 27 the sanctuary is designated as both "temple" (*hekal*) (v. 4) and "tabernacle" (*'ohel*) (v. 6).

It is further noteworthy that the parallel expressions "house" (*bayith*) and temple (*hekal*) appearing in this verse, occur frequently in Ugaritic literature (see p. 618) as synonyms for the dwelling place of a deity. The following is a typical example: "Then went Anath to her house (*bt*), the goddess proceeded to her temple (*hkl*).

In the modern Jewish ritual, Ps. 5:7 has been selected for recital as the worshiper enters the synagogue.

9. Faithfulness. Heb. *nekonah*, from *kun*, meaning "to be firmly established," "to be trustworthy." The enemies are wholly undependable; they are utterly false and treacherous. Absalom had gone to Hebron on a false pretense (see 2 Sam. 15:7–10).

Wickedness. Literally, "destruction." Moreover, their throats, like open graves, are ready to devour the happiness of others. Paul employs this passage to characterize man's universal depravity (Rom. 3:13). Further, the psalmist refers to another member of the body, the tongue, as being equally depraved (see James 3:5–9). This description appears pertinent to the treachery of Absalom and his fellow rebels (see 2 Sam. 15:1–6).

10. Destroy. Heb. *'asham*, "to be guilty." In the form employed here, the word *'asham* means "to hold guilty." The psalmist desires that God would treat his enemies as guilty, which they undoubtedly are. He asks that they may "fall by their own counsels," that is, that their own plans may be the means of their destruction (see Ps. 7:15, 16; Prov. 26:27; Prov. 28:10). This idea is frequent in the OT. Sin eventually consumes itself.

11. Rejoice. See on Ps. 2:12. Those that trust in God ever have an occasion for joy. Their joy finds expression in shouting. They rejoice because God defends them. The psalmist extends his own joy to include all who trust in God.

Name. Often synonymous with "person."

Be joyful in thee. The devout Christian will rejoice in all that God has revealed of Himself. He finds his joy in God, in contemplating His attributes and the evidences of His love, in communion with Him, and in loving service for Him.

12. Compass him. Or, "crown him."

Shield. Heb. *sinnah*, a large shield that is said to have covered the whole body (not the *magen* of Ps. 3:3). As the shield is thrown around the soldier in the day of battle, so God gives complete protection to the righteous. The psalm closes with the psalmist's avowal of perfect trust in God's complete protection. The Bay Psalm Book paraphrases the verse: "And wilt him crowne as with a shield, with gracious acceptation."

With a morning prayer such as this, the psalmist is ready to meet the onslaughts of the day's foes. Spurgeon has appropriately remarked, "Let us give to God the mornings of our days and the mornings of our lives. Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night. Devotion should be both the morning star and the evening star. If we start the day right, we shall be more aware of God's presence through its hours, and surer of coming to our beds at night with quietness and confidence in our hearts."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 ML 15; 1T 397

4, 5 2T 351

PSALM 6

INTRODUCTION.—The first of seven penitential psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143; see p. 624), Ps. 6 is profoundly personal. Maclaren says: "If ever a throb of personal anguish found tears and a voice, it does so in this Psalm." Luther called it "a penitential prayer for the health of the body and the soul." In it the psalmist expresses his bodily agony and torment of soul as he is taunted by those who maintain that God has forsaken him. Although he is at the brink of death, he fervently prays for relief and insists that God hears his prayer and redeems him. Like Ps. 3, this psalm exhibits a sudden dramatic

change: in vs. 8–10 profound melancholy is turned into exultation. For a description of a similar poignant experience see Ps. 30.

For comment on the superscription see pp. 616, 627, 629.

1. Rebuke me not. Calamity and illness were anciently often considered to be divine punishment for sin. In his anguish the psalmist assumes that God is displeased with him and therefore chastises him. The psalmist pleads that his well-deserved rebuke may be in mercy, not in anger (see Jer. 10:24). As frequently in the OT, the inspired writer characterizes the attitudes and actions of Deity in the language of men (see on Ps. 2:4). In the Hebrew, the last word of v. 1 ends with the long sound *ee*. This sound predominates throughout the psalm, especially at the close of many of the verses, and constitutes an interesting resemblance of sounds called assonance that imparts a penitential tone to the psalm (see p. 624).

2. I am weak. Literally, "I am withering." The verb is frequently applied to the withering of plants (Isa. 16:8; Isa. 24:4, 7; Joel 1:12).

Heal me. A direct plea for physical healing, although no specific disease is mentioned. His bones are "vexed." This statement shows the intense agony of his bodily frame; his whole body is tormented with pain.

3. My soul is also sore vexed. Even greater than bodily pain is agony of mind. The psalmist is unable to clear his mind of the thought that he is suffering God's displeasure. He breaks forth with the piercing exclamation: "O Lord, how long?" as if, groping to express a glimmer of hope in God's ability to heal, he suddenly realizes, in his humanity, the hopelessness of his plight and, as it were, cries out instead, "How long will this agony continue until I find relief?" (see Job 7:2–4). It seems to him that God has forsaken him in his illness. The Christian may find comfort in the thought that earthly sufferings are insignificant when compared to the joy of heaven (see Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17, 18).

4. Return, O Lord. The psalmist now pleads for deliverance. "My soul" is idiomatic for the personal pronoun "me." The appeal is to God's mercy, as one of the attributes of His character (see Ex. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Ps. 86:15).

5. No remembrance. This verse constitutes evidence against the doctrine of a conscious intermediate state between death and the resurrection (see Ps. 88:10; 146:4; Isa. 38:18).

6. Make I my bed to swim. The psalmist, unable to sleep, weeps "all the night" (or, "every night") over his sufferings. The poet indulges in the extreme hyperbole of vs. 6, 7 to express the intensity of his anguish. It appears that it must have been, not only physical pain, but deep mental anguish that exhausted him. If the psalm grew out of the trouble existing on account of Absalom's rebellion, it is easy to understand the anguish of the father bereft of his son, stunned with a realization of his offspring's base ingratitude (see David's lament over Absalom, 2 Sam. 18:33; 19:1–4).

Compare with David's picturesque expression the following one taken from a Ugaritic (see p. 618) religious poem: "He grasped, in the evening, his bed, while he wept and slept in his tears."

7. All mine enemies. Possibly Absalom and his associates.

8. Depart from me. The transition from trouble to relief is not gradual but immediate. Light breaks suddenly on the darkness as if the sun had burst forth in the blackness of a moonless midnight. Faith triumphs; and by faith, seeing his enemies scattered, the

psalmist commands them to leave. This is faith in action. God sometimes answers our prayers before we cease praying (see Isa. 65:24).

The Lord hath heard. God hears the cry of distress, and regards it as the sincere prayer of the soul. Words are not the essential genius of prayer. Tears may express the unutterable anguish of the human soul.

9. The Lord hath heard. How natural it is for the devout soul to add strength to strength by repeating thoughts of assurance and joy. The psalmist emphasizes the joy of v. 8.

Will receive. Since God has heard his prayer, the psalmist rests without fear, knowing that God will hear.

10. Vexed. Heb. *bahal*, the word translated "vexed" in vs. 2, 3. The psalmist prays that his enemies—the enemies of God—may be confounded in their plans. It is proper to pray that the machinations of evil men may come to nought.

Suddenly. The sooner the plans of evil men are broken, the better. The psalmist prays that his enemies may turn back at the frustration of their hopes.

Ps. 6 should bring special comfort to the one who is afflicted with intense, seemingly incurable, physical or mental distress. "Prayer changes things."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5 GC 546

8 4T 514

PSALM 7

INTRODUCTION.—A fitting motto for Ps. 7, it has been said, might be, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The psalmist prays for protection against the attack of his enemies, in full confidence that God's immutable law saves the righteous and punishes the wicked. He does not recognize his sin—indeed, if he has sinned, he has done so unwittingly—whereas his enemies have sinned in plotting against him. He prays for his own deliverance and the destruction of his enemies and closes with a confident expectation of the answer to his prayer as a vindication of God's moral government. The psalm is sung at the Jewish Feast of Purim because it celebrates vengeance upon an adversary (see Esther 9:13–32).

On the superscription see pp. 616, 628. It appears from the content and tone of the psalm that it was sung in view of something that was said or done to wound grievously the feelings of the psalmist and to destroy his peace of soul. Who Cush was is not known. The Talmud says that Cush the Benjamite means Saul, thus recalling the enmity between David and Saul. It seems unlikely, however, that the generous-hearted David, who penned the exquisite lines of 2 Sam. 1:17–27, would have used the language of Ps. 7:14–16 with reference to Saul. Perhaps this Benjamite belonged to Saul's tribe and was one of those who took an active part against David.

1. Put my trust. Literally, "seek refuge." The psalm begins with a profession of confidence (see Ps. 11:1; 16:1; 31:1; 71:1). In that refuge, safer than mountain cave, the psalmist rests in the arms of God, praying for deliverance from his pursuers.

2. Lest he. Perhaps Cush the Benjamite (see Introduction to Ps. 7).

Like a lion. The blind, unreasonable rage of the psalmist's pursuer is compared to the instinctive fierceness of a lion. Shepherds and farmers in Israel were familiar with the onslaughts of wild beasts (see 1 Sam. 17:34–37).

3. If I have done this. Compare vs. 3–5 with the extended oath in Job 31. The psalmist passionately protests his innocence. His words are broken by the intensity of his emotions. The enemy may have accused the psalmist of wantonly taking something of great value that belonged to another (see on v. 4); it appears to be an accusation of gross slander, of defamation of character (see 1 Sam. 24:12; 26:18).

4. Have delivered. Heb. *chalaṣ*, which, according to some authorities, in the form here used may also mean "to plunder," "to despoil." If this is its intended meaning, then there is a reference here to the charge of the enemy (see on v. 3). However, the more common meaning of *chalaṣ* is "to deliver" (see 2 Sam. 22:20; Job 36:15; Ps. 34:7; etc.) and hence the reading of the KJV is to be preferred. According to this rendering the psalmist protests that instead of taking advantage of him "that was at peace" with him, he has done just the opposite: he has rescued the man who was at war with him (see 1 Sam. 24:4–7).

5. Let the enemy persecute. The language of the curse invoked upon the psalmist's own head is the language of an innocent man most cruelly wronged. The accused would prefer to be annihilated rather than to live under the weight of so great a condemnation. The emphasis is extreme: "persecute my soul [me]," "tread down my life," "lay mine honour in the dust."

Selah. See p. 629. The word may be singularly appropriate here. An interval of some type may well occur between the above abjuration and the prayer following.

6. Arise. The Lord is called upon to show Himself as judge, ready to punish those who persecute the psalmist (see Ps. 3:7). He is asked to sit publicly as a judge.

Enemies. The idea of a single enemy is extended to include those associated with him, or perhaps all David's foes.

The judgment. David calls on God to execute upon these particular enemies the punishment that His eternal law requires shall be executed upon all who transgress that law. Speaking, as it were, man to man, David asks God to vindicate the principles of His moral government (see Gen. 18:25). How prone is man to attempt to hasten the Almighty in carrying out His plans. Compare the experience of Habakkuk (chs. 1:1 to 2:4).

7. For their sakes. God's vindication of His law would inspire confidence in Him, and His people would gather round Him to express their gratitude and praise.

8. According to my righteousness. This may be understood as referring to the particular case at hand. Although we should continually feel unworthy of salvation, it is proper, when we are unjustly accused, to pray that according to His will God will vindicate us in a particular case, and declare us innocent of false charges. The word "integrity" (Heb. *tom*, from the root *tamam*, "to be complete") parallels "righteousness," and similarly may be understood to refer to this particular case.

9. Wickedness. When a man sees the sinfulness of sin in one case, he wishes that all sin might come to an end. It is right to pray for an end to wrong.

The hearts. Anciently the expression "heart" was used to designate the seat of the thoughts.

Reins. Heb. *kelayoth*, "kidneys," anciently used to designate the seat of the emotions, suggesting the inmost feelings, purposes, motives of the soul. The phrase here used—of trying the hearts and reins—is frequently employed to describe God's omniscience (see Jer. 11:20; Ps. 26:2; Rev. 2:23).

10. Defence. Heb. *magen*, literally, "shield." The psalmist's defense is his reliance upon God as vindicator of the innocent.

In Ugaritic (see pp. 618, 619) the root *mgn* is used in the sense of "to implore," or "to beseech." Hence *maginni*, "my defence," should probably be translated "my entreaty," making the clause read, "my entreaty is unto God."

11. God judgeth the righteous. This sentence may also be translated "God is a righteous judge." Verses 11–16 vividly portray God's dealing with the wicked.

Every day. As if wishing to correct the false impression that God had been indifferent to his plight and that he had called on God to vindicate him after God had failed to do so. The psalmist now plainly states that God's displeasure with the wicked is constant. He sees God's uniform justice at all times, despite temporary appearances to the contrary. The Christian should be careful not to allow a lone instance of apparent injustice to create a generalization that questions God's consistent purposes.

12. If he turn not. The law that punishment inevitably falls upon the unrepentant sinner is made clear by representing God as a mighty warrior preparing His weapons for the punishment of the wicked (see Deut. 32:41–43).

13. Instruments of death. Means of punishing.

Persecutors. Heb. *doleqim*, from the root *dalaq*, "to set ablaze." Hence possibly an allusion to the ancient custom of shooting fiery arrows upon the enemy for the sake of setting their camps on fire and inflicting greater bodily injury. The destruction intended is certain.

14. He travaileth. That is, the wicked man is pregnant with iniquity. The verb includes the two acts indicated by the following verbs: "hath conceived" and "brought forth." The perpetration of mischief is described in the metaphor of childbirth (see Isa. 33:11; James 1:15).

15. He made a pit. We may picture a man digging a pit, with the loose soil giving way as he digs, thus trapping him in it himself in place of the wild animal that he hoped to catch. Sin confuses the sinner. Evil is a boomerang. A striking OT example of this principle is found in the life of Haman (see Esther 5–7; Prov. 26:27; Eccl. 10:8).

16. His mischief. That is, the mischief he intended for others. This statement is a repetition in another form of the idea expressed in vs. 14, 15 (see Ps. 9:15; 35:8; 37:15).

Pate. The head itself, or the top or crown of the head. The idea is that what the wicked man designed for others shall come upon himself. The two clauses of this verse are an example of synonymous parallelism. The words for "head" and "pate" appear repeatedly as parallels in Ugaritic literature (see pp. 618, 619).

17. His righteousness. The divine righteousness is displayed in God's vindication and deliverance of the innocent.

Name. Here, as frequently in the OT, "name" represents the person, sometimes with emphasis on the essential nature or character of the person.

Most High. Heb. *'Elyon*, "exalted" (see Vol. I, p. 173). David praises Jehovah, who, by virtue of His executing justice, has shown Himself exalted above all other beings.

A concluding doxology of this form is typical of many psalms. It is well that meditations close with praise.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

9 GC 605; 3T 191

PSALM 8

INTRODUCTION.—This psalm is the first of the nature psalms (see Ps. 19, 29, 104, etc.), and is a revelation of God's majesty in nature and in human life. This Song of the Starry Night, as the poem has appropriately been termed, is witness to the fact that the Hebrew poet did not see nature as an end in itself, but always looked beyond nature to nature's God. The psalm has also been called A Psalm in Praise of the Dignity of Man. In it the poet stands under the open canopy of the moonlit and star-studded sky, awe-struck by his contemplation of God's handiwork in nature. In the presence of all this vastness, there comes upon him a sudden realization of the insignificance of puny man. No sooner, however, is this feeling entertained than it is swallowed up in his consciousness of the true dignity of man, who is God's representative on earth, in nature a little less than divine, with all things put in subjection under his feet. No wonder that the psalmist, thus impressed by the dignified position that man holds in the universe, should extol the excellence of his Creator. Ps. 8 exhibits a charming literary figure that has been called the "envelope structure," in which the opening thought is repeated or concluded at the end of the poem (vs. 1, 9; cf. Ps. 103 and 104), the intervening verses to be interpreted in the light of this enveloping thought.

Although the circumstances of composition are not known, it is not hard to imagine that David wrote this exquisite lyric during one of those nights of his early shepherd life when, alone with his sheep, he looked up into the starry sky and felt the dignity of kinship with his Maker; or that, later in life, he composed it in recollection of the ecstasy of such early experiences.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 629.

1. O Lord. Heb. *Yahweh*, the divine name. *'Elohim* (God) and *'Adonai* (Lord) are titles, not names (see Vol. I, pp. 171, 172).

Lord. Heb. *'Adonai*, "master," "ruler" (see Vol. I, p. 173). A combination of the two forms designates *Yahweh* as the rightful master of His creatures.

Name. See on Ps. 7:17. The first half of this verse is repeated as v. 9 at the close of the psalm.

All the earth. The psalmist addresses God, not as a national deity, but as Lord of the universe. Speaking in the name of the people, associating himself with his brethren, he says "our" instead of "my" (see Matt. 6:9). The individual is forgotten in contemplation of God's majesty in the heavens.

Hast set. Heb. *tanah*, the exact meaning of which is uncertain. Some have suggested the meaning "to recount." The RSV translation "chanted" cannot be obtained from the Hebrew as it stands. The LXX reads "was exalted." The idea seems to be that God's glory is extolled by the heavenly beings. Why then should not mortals sing God's praise as they contemplate the majesty of His created works?

2. Babes. From the Heb. *'olel*, "child," referring here to a boy or child, or one like a child.

Sucklings. From the Heb. *yoneq*, "suckling child," or, "one like an unweaned babe."

Ordained strength. God has used as instruments of His power those who are otherwise as feeble as little children and babies. Through them He has shown His power in stilling "the enemy and the avenger."

Still. Heb. *shabath*, "to rest," from which our word "sabbath" is derived. The form used here means "to cause to rest," "to desist." The enemy is caused to desist from his plans.

Jesus quoted this passage (Matt. 21:16) to vindicate the hosannas of the children in the Temple against the objections of the scribes and Pharisees. Some interpreters see in this verse the key to the whole psalm. In their opinion, the sense is that puny little man is the babe of creation, yet God has given him strength to rule the world of which he is such an insignificant part, and thus conferred upon him dignity and honor far beyond that of the rest of the creation which He governs.

3. The moon and the stars. This psalm is the outgrowth of the psalmist's contemplation of the sky at night. The moon and the stars shine out. There is no mention of the sun. It is probable that gazing upon the starlit sky at night produces in the heart of man greater awe and wonder than looking up into the sunlit heavens, when the sights and sounds of earth distract from the singleness of contemplation.

4. What is man? "Man" is from the Heb. *'enosh*, which designates man in his frailty and weakness. When one stands in the presence of the vastness, the mystery, the glory of the heavens as seen at night, and begins to reflect upon the infinity of space and the countlessness of the heavenly bodies, he must feel that man is an insignificantly small dot in the universe. If this is the reaction of ordinary unschooled mortals, how much truer must it be of the one who looks upon the heavens with the aid of the modern telescope, in the light of the steadily unfolding knowledge of modern astronomy.

Son of man. Heb. *ben–'adam*, probably emphasizing man's earthly nature as formed from the ground (see on Gen. 1:26; 2:7).

Visitest. Heb. *paqad*, a word describing not only the act of visiting but also what the visitor accomplishes by his visit. Hence here the word indicates God's care of the human being, His favor and attention shown toward man (see Gen. 21:1). Why should the infinite God, who has a universe of worlds to claim His attention, be "mindful" of finite man? Why should He honor man by making him viceroy of the earth? Only in the realization of the worth of a human soul created in God's likeness can one answer these questions. This realization comes only in appreciation of the Saviour's death on the cross. "The worth of man is known only by going to Calvary. In the mystery of the cross of Christ we can place an estimate upon man" (2T 634, 635).

Important as the revelation of God in external nature may be, the revelation of God in human life is more important. Size and extent are no criteria of value. It has been said that the eye and brain that see the physical heavens are more wonderful than the heavens that are seen through the most powerful telescope.

5. Than the angels. Heb. *me'elohim*, literally, "than God." The Targums, the LXX, the Syriac, and the quotation of this verse in Heb. 2:7 read "angels" instead of "God." However, the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, as well as the Vulgate, retain the translation "God." It has been supposed that *'Elohim* may be applied to men or angels (see Ex. 21:6; Ps. 82:1; Vol. I, p. 171). Gesenius renders the text: "Thou

hast caused him to want but little of God," that is, "thou hast made him but little lower than God" (see Gen. 1:26). Whether we read "than the angels" (see GC 511) or "than God," man is shown to be on a much higher level than the animal kingdom, because of his kinship with God. Nevertheless, at his best, finite man is far inferior to the infinite God. See further on Heb. 2:7.

Glory and honour. As king and ruler of the earth, man partakes of the attributes of God (see Ps. 29:1; 104:1; 145:5), who is king of the universe.

6. Dominion. See Gen. 1:26, 28. Man is an earthly king, with a territory and subjects. This dominion, given him at creation, has never been entirely lost. However, Satan has temporarily usurped dominion and will surrender it only when compelled to do so at the end of time (see Rev. 11:15; cf. Dan. 7:13, 14, 18, 22, 27).

All things. These are explained in vs. 7, 8 (see Gen. 1). Paul extends the meaning of "all things" so as to show that once again, through the victory of Jesus Christ, man will regain the dominion he had lost (Heb. 2:6–18). Through Christ man is capable of mastery over himself, over the lower orders of creation, and over his fellows, in mutual subjection to the dominion of Christ.

7. Sheep and oxen. Flocks and herds, subservient as beasts of burden and farm animals (Gen. 1:26).

Beasts of the field. Animals that roam at large; many of our present-day domestic animals were at one time wild. Their subduing and taming by the power of man is significant evidence that God has placed "all things under his feet."

8. Fowl. See Gen. 1:26; 9:2.

Fish. See Gen. 1:26; 9:2.

Paths of the seas. A study of oceanography reveals contours of the ocean's floor that are suggestive highways for the creatures of the sea to traverse.

9. How excellent! The statement of v. 1 is repeated. Contemplation of God's majesty and man's dignity as His representative leads to adoration. Verses 1, 9 together form the two parts of a poetic structure that has been called an envelope because it envelops the intervening thought. Verses 2–8 illustrate the sentiment expressed in vs. 1, 9.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 ML 39; 2T 580
3, 4 3T 377
5 GC 511; 3T 50, 568; 4T 416
5, 6 PP 50
6 CS 17
6–8 PP 45
9 3T 377

PSALM 9

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 9 has been called A Song of Thanksgiving. The poem praises God as the righteous judge who punishes the wicked and defends the oppressed. Only one verse (v. 13) interrupts with sinister sound the succession of triumphant notes that constitute this song. This psalm is the first of the acrostic, or alphabetic, psalms (Ps. 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145), although in it the acrostic form is not followed as rigidly as in some others of the group. Each line of the first stanza begins with *'aleph*, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Thereafter only the first line of each stanza observes the law, and even then there is some deviation from the rule. Absolutely regular in its

divisions, the psalm consists of ten equal stanzas. As is usual in the acrostic psalms, the thought is emphasized by repetition in its various aspects, with no marked development or sequence in the organization of ideas. Some suggest that 2 Sam. 8 provides a suitable background for the psalm, although the psalm contains no specific reference to any historical incident. Some Hebrew manuscripts, the LXX, and the Vulgate join Ps. 9 and 10 as one psalm. See p. 625.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 628.

1. With my whole heart. The psalm opens in a mood of deepest gratitude. Here there is no divided affection. All the psalmist's powers are employed in praising God. Moreover, the expression of thankfulness is wholehearted and sincere, finding an outlet in far more than lip service.

All thy marvellous works. The psalmist is ever eager to praise God for all God's blessings to him, not only for the deliverances that constitute the immediate cause for praise. The particular divine interpositions are referred to in vs. 3–5.

2. Sing praise. Heb. *zamar*, the root of the noun *mizmor*, "psalm." *Zamar* means both "to sing" and "to play an instrument."

Most High. Heb. *'Elyon* (see on Ps. 7:17). God is the sovereign of the world.

3. At thy presence. When God appears, the enemy falls. It is the manifestation of God's power that brings the victory.

4. My right and my cause. God had defended the righteous cause. He is the vindicator.

Thou satest. An archaic form of "you sat." The picture is of the judge sitting on the throne (see v. 7) deciding on the merits of the case. His decision is in favor of the psalmist.

5. Heathen. Heb. *goyim*, "nations" (see on Ps. 2:1).

Put out their name. When a nation is subdued, its name ceases to be recorded among the kingdoms of the earth.

6. O thou enemy. The first line of the verse reads literally, "The enemy—they shall be finished [consumed]—perpetual desolations." The verse is a picture of utter destruction of the enemy.

7. But the Lord. In the Hebrew text v. 6 ends with *hemmah*. The word remains untranslated in most versions, because its meaning, "they," cannot be fitted into the context. From Ugaritic evidence (see p. 618) we now know that *hemmah* also had the meaning "lo" or "behold." If such is its meaning here *hemmah* should stand at the beginning of v. 7, making the first part of the verse read, "Behold, the Lord shall endure forever." By placing the punctuation mark, which did not exist in the time of the psalmist, before *hemmah* instead of after it, the acrostic arrangement of the psalm is improved. The readjustment makes v. 7 begin with the Hebrew letter *he*, which it does not do in the present Hebrew text.

Shall endure. Literally, "is seated." In strong contrast with the desolation of v. 6, God remains forever seated upon the throne of judgment, judging equitably. "Change and decay in all around I see; O Thou, who changest not, abide with me!"

8. Judge the world. Compare Rev. 20:12, 13. As God had shown Himself a righteous judge in the case that forms the background of the psalm, so will He do in the last judgment. Verses 7, 8, which constitute the fourth stanza, do not follow the acrostic pattern.

9. Refuge. Heb. *miśgab*, "a secure height" (see Ps. 18:2; 46:7; 48:3).

10. Know thy name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17. To know God's name means to be acquainted with His character.

Put their trust. As a God of law, God can be trusted to act justly (see Ps. 62:8; 64:10; 111:5).

Hast not forsaken. Men may forsake God; He never forsakes His children.

11. Sing praises. In view of God's holy character and His kindness to men, the psalmist calls on others to praise God with him.

Zion. See on Ps. 2:6; cf. Ps. 3:4; 5:7.

Among the people. God's wondrous ways to Israel are to be proclaimed to all nations, that these nations too may acknowledge God and enjoy His protection. God's mercy was not meant for Israel alone (see Ps. 105:1). This sentiment occurs throughout the psalms. If Israel had learned this lesson, the rigid exclusiveness practiced by the Pharisees would never have existed.

12. Maketh inquisition. Compare Gen. 9:5, where the Hebrew verb for "maketh inquisition" is translated "require." God is represented as an executioner going forth to punish the guilty. Murder is a heinous crime in the sight of heaven. God, the Avenger of blood, cannot overlook the taking of human life (see Gen. 4:10). He is Israel's next of kin, pledged to take vengeance for the shedding of innocent blood (see on Ruth 2:20).

Humble. Or, "afflicted."

13. Gates of death. The Hebrews associated death with *she'ol*, the figurative abode of the dead, conceived of, in poetic imagery, as a place the entrance to which was guarded by gates (Isa. 38:10). In the Babylonian concept, *she'ol* was a city enclosed by seven walls with seven double-bolted gates to keep the dead from returning to the land of the living. The psalmist felt that he had come so near to the gate of death that only God could rescue him; so now in the present peril he looks to Him for deliverance. The phrase "gates of death" appears also in Ps. 107:18. In all of Ps. 9 only v. 13 interrupts the succession of triumphant declarations.

14. Shew forth. Since the dead cannot praise God (Ps. 88:10–12; 115:17), the psalmist calls on God to save him so that he may praise Him among the living.

Gates. In contrast with the "gates of death" (v. 13), these gates are at the city entrance, where the assembled people exchanged news (ancient substitute for a daily newspaper). It was a convenient place for publicity (the agora of the Greeks, the forum of the Romans).

Daughter of Zion. The inhabitants of Jerusalem; Zion, or Jerusalem, being regarded as the mother city. The occurrence of the name "Zion" here and in v. 11 above indicates that that psalm must have been composed after Zion, or Jerusalem, became the capital of the kingdom and the seat of worship.

15. Heathen. The idolatrous nations arrayed against the psalmist (see on Ps. 2:1; 9:5).

In the pit. This and the following phrase express the same thought as Ps. 7:15. Two methods of capturing game are employed as figures of speech. The thought is repeated in v. 16 below. The punishment fits the crime.

16. By the judgment. By virtue of His permitting the mischief of the nations to come back upon their own heads, God's saving power has been exhibited before all.

Of his own hands. Compare v. 15, also Ps. 7:15.

Higgaion. The word is found elsewhere in Psalms only in Ps. 19:14, where it is translated "meditation," and Ps. 92:3, where it is translated "solemn sound." The word is of doubtful meaning, and it is difficult to account for the insertion of the term at this point in the poem. It may possibly be an indication of either a musical sound or an interlude in its public rendition.

Selah. See p. 629.

17. Shall be turned. Literally, "shall return." The same Hebrew verb is translated "are turned back" in v. 3.

18. Needy. This word and the word "poor" in the second half of the verse signify not only those who suffer under poverty but those who are the victims of oppression (see on v. 12). That God especially cares for the poor and needy is one of the great truths of the OT.

Forgotten. A play on the word "forget" of v. 17. God will not forget those who need His deliverance and protection.

Expectation. Earnest desire for deliverance. The poor and needy will not always be disappointed.

19. Arise, O Lord. The psalmist solemnly appeals to God to take His place as judge of the earth (see on Ps. 3:7).

Man. Heb. *'enosh*, "man" in his frailty and impotence; in striking contrast to God as powerful judge (see on Ps. 8:4).

Sight. From the Heb. *paneh*, literally, "face." The Ugaritic (see p. 618) *pn* also means face, but in addition is used with the meaning "will," or "purpose," a definition it shares with the Canaanite *pânu* of the Amarna Letters (see Vol. I, pp. 105, 106). Hence here and in certain other passages (Ps. 21:9, where it is translated "anger"; Ps. 80:16, where it is translated "countenance"; and Ps. 82:2, where it is translated "persons") *paneh* should possibly be rendered "will." Such a translation would make the text read, "Let the nations be judged according to thy will."

20. Fear. Heb. *morah*, the consonants of which represent the word for "teacher." The LXX and the Syriac follow this reading. Others regard *morah* a misspelling for *mora'*, "fear" (KJV, RSV); still others a misspelling for *me'erah*, a "curse," which yields the translation "place a curse upon them."

Men. Heb. *'enosh*, the same word as in v. 19. The poem closes with emphasis on the idea of man's frailty in the sight of the Judge of all the earth.

Selah. See p. 629.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 3T 377

5, 6 GC 545; PP 341

9, 10 Ed 257
15 PP 456
20 PK 429

PSALM 10

INTRODUCTION.—In four Hebrew manuscripts, the LXX and the Vulgate versions, Ps. 9 and 10 are united as one psalm, which is numbered Ps. 9. The two psalms are similar in picturing the enemies of God, but in Ps. 10 the enemies are oppressing their weaker brethren within the nation of Israel. And whereas Ps. 9 abounds in praise and thanksgiving, Ps. 10 voices an appeal to God to avenge the oppressed and destroy their oppressors. The psalm shows some acrostic organization. Like Ps. 9, the tenth is regular in its divisions; there are ten stanzas, the first six characterizing the enemies, the last four appealing to God for deliverance (see p. 625).

1. Afar off. The psalm begins with the dramatic picture of God's apparent indifference to the psalmist's trouble at the very time when His interposition should be most expected.

2. Pride. Verses 2–11 present in formidable array a catalogue of the enemies' characteristics.

Persecute. Heb. *dalaq*, translated "hotly pursued" in Gen. 31:36 and "pursued" in Lam. 4:19. The second clause of the verse is a plea that justice may be done (see on Ps. 7:15, 16). The extended plea for God's intervention begins in v. 12.

3. His heart's desire. He boasts of the evil desires of his heart. He boasts that he gets all he desires.

Blesseth the covetous. It is difficult to translate the Hebrew of this verse. The RSV renders this line, "the man greedy for gain curses and renounces the Lord." The word for "blesseth" occasionally means "to curse" (see on Job 1:5), but it is doubtful whether it has that meaning here. The word translated "covetous" comes from the Hebrew root meaning "to cut off," hence "to make a large profit." Jesus warned, "Beware of covetousness" (Luke 12:15). We tend to place emphasis on the sins of the flesh, forgetting that the acquisitive instinct may become as evil or perverted and unrestrained as carnal lust. Covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5; cf. Ex. 20:17). The evil man's contempt for God is shown in the following verses.

4. Countenance. Pride shows on the face.

God is not in all his thoughts. Literally, "nothingness of God, all his thoughts." The RSV translates the clause "all his thoughts are, 'There is no God.'" The idea here expressed is not necessarily that the wicked denies the existence of God, but that he does not take God into his reckoning. However, today it is true that the wicked tries to make himself believe that there is no God. Constant self-assertion of the idea practically makes him an atheist, although it is to be doubted whether it is really possible for any man to be an absolute atheist. The wicked man acts as if there were no God, thus practically denying His existence. Verse 11 shows that he has some thoughts of God.

5. Are always grievous. The Hebrew verb may also mean "to endure." Because of his success in evildoing, the wicked imagines that his success will continue so, and that he may carry on his nefarious work with impunity. Too often those who observe him think the same (see Job 12:6; Jer. 12:1). This is one of the great problems discussed by OT writers.

Far above. He thinks that God is too remote to be concerned about punishing him.

7. Under his tongue. That is, ready to be spoken. The psalmist now proceeds to name the open acts of the wicked.

Vanity. Or, "wickedness."

8. Villages. These may refer to unwalled settlements, as houses and farm buildings erected around an open place; or the camps of nomadic tribes open to attack (see Lev. 25:31). The wicked lurk near such places to rob and harry the hapless person who enters or leaves.

9. As a lion. The wicked man conceals his purposes and springs suddenly upon his victim when there is no hope of escape.

Net. The figure changes to that of a hunter, laying his snare, springing his net suddenly upon his wretched victim. This tendency to shift suddenly from image to image is a characteristic feature of Hebrew literature.

11. He hath said. The wicked man acts as if God takes no notice of him (see on v. 4). The recognition that God sees should be one of man's strongest guards against evil. Verses 1–11 do not follow with regularity the acrostic pattern begun in Ps. 9. Verses 12–18 pick up the last four letters of the alphabet.

12. Forget. This word catches up the idea, "hath forgotten," of v. 11. With v. 12 the complaint of vs. 1–11 gives way to a note of thanksgiving, triumph, and quiet confidence in God.

13. Wherefore? Contending for God's honor as judge, the psalmist entreats the Lord to answer the proud boasting of the wicked (see on Ps. 7:15, 16).

Wilt not require it. The belief that there will be no final reckoning accounts for much of the evil in the world. The conviction that the judgment day will come, in which God will preside as judge, is in itself a deterrent to evil.

14. Thou hast seen. The arrogant belief of the wicked man, who denies God's observation of man's evil ways, is stoutly denied by the psalmist. Therefore, the poor man may safely leave his cause to God, in full assurance that justice will be done.

Fatherless. Symbolic of those who fall an easy prey to the rapacious, and therefore need God's help. The word appears in this symbolic use especially in Deuteronomy, Job, and Psalms.

15. Arm. By the figure of metonymy, a symbol of strength.

Till thou find none. Until not even God, in His divine scrutiny, can find any trace of evil. God is asked to punish crime so that it may not be repeated.

16. The Lord is King. As King, God must administer justice. He caused the overthrow of the heathen (Ps. 9); the wicked in Israel will also be punished. The verse is a clear example of antithetic parallelism (see p. 24).

17. Of the humble. The desire of the humble is to be freed from oppressions.

Prepare. Heb. *kun*, "to be firm," "to be firmly established."

18. Fatherless. See on v. 14.

Man. Heb. *'enosh* (see on Ps. 8:4; 9:19).

Of the earth. There is a play on words, in the Hebrew the words for "oppress" and "earth" having two of their three consonants alike. Why should a creature of the earth trample on the rights of his fellows or assert superiority over his equals?

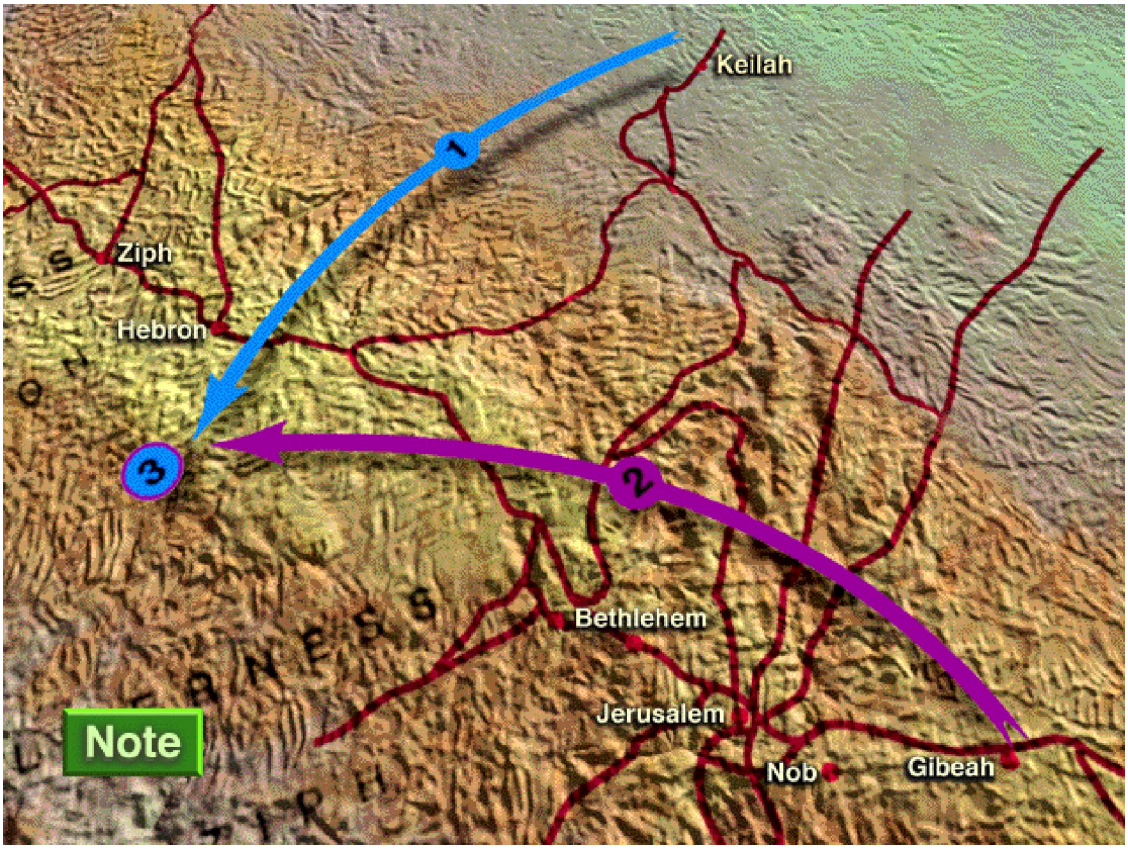
The psalm closes on a note of absolute confidence in God's vindication of the oppressed. Faith counts the thing as done.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 CS 26
4 CT 64; FE 414; 1T 496; 2T 144; 5T 402; 9T 12
9 AH 72; EW 105

When Foundations Give Way

[3]



At times, when foundations seem to totter, help comes from most unexpected places. God's overruling power is as certain today as in the days of David. God reveals His love toward those tempted to make reckless moves by encouraging them to trust divine watchcare and to take hold of the problem of restoring the break in the battered wall. The time will then come when those who thus conquer will ride on the high places of the earth. Psalm 11:1-4, 6

[4]

Historical background to 1 Samuel 23:9–18

PSALM 11

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[3]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 3:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

[4]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

INTRODUCTION.—A fugitive in the Wilderness of Ziph, David was encouraged by an unexpected visit from Jonathan. The two men freely talked together and "made a covenant before the Lord" (Sam. 23:16–18). After the visit, David sang Psalm 11 (see PP 660, 661). By this psalm David expressed his absolute confidence in God's protection at a time when his life was threatened and he was urged to continued flight. In form, the psalm exhibits an interesting example of interruption. The main theme is a profession of the psalmist's trust in God's care. This is interrupted by the threats of the faithless (Ps. 11:1–3). The Hebrew of this short psalm is vivid, forceful, and direct; in it, assonance is freely used, the dominating vowel sounds at the close of the verses varying from verse to verse. It is said that Mary, Queen of Scots, recited Ps. 11 while kneeling at the scaffold awaiting execution. In the hour of trial it may likewise express our trust in God.

On the superscription see p. 616.

1. Trust. Heb. *chasah*, "seek refuge." The psalm begins with an expression of absolute confidence, and closes (v. 7) in the same mood. The thought is interrupted in the middle of the verse.

How say ye? How can you give me this counsel when I put my trust in God? The counsel follows to the end of v. 3.

My soul. Or, "me" (see on Ps. 16:10).

Flee as a bird. Probably a proverb, used in warning a man to seek his only safety in flight. Who can find the little bird that seeks safety in the thickets and crannies of the rocks? The picture may have been very forceful to the Hebrews, who no doubt at times had taken refuge in caves. David lives serenely because he takes refuge in God. The idea is frequent in Psalms.

2. Privily. Literally, "in darkness," hence secretly, treacherously, when the victim is off guard.

3. Foundations. These may here be thought of as the principles upon which good government rests: respect for truth and righteousness. If these are destroyed, what further can the righteous do? If the king and his counselors show contempt for that which they should uphold, collapse is inevitable. The righteous, helpless in such a case, can seek safety only in flight. But the psalmist does not accept such counsel. Verses 4–6 are his reply.

4. In heaven. Compare Hab. 2:20. Since God is in heaven, the psalmist has nothing to fear. The persecuted have a Protector to whom they can always appeal. The psalmist replies to his advisers with an unequivocal conviction. He knows his God.

His eyelids try. Although God is in heaven, He scrutinizes the actions of His children upon earth. God's scrutiny should not alarm; in His love and justice He sees into the very heart of the truth. There is nothing incompatible about God's being in heaven, yet concerned with his earthly creation (see Isa. 57:15).

5. Trieth the righteous. God tests all men, even the righteous, but when He approves the righteous, His care is assured.

Hateth. Because of His nature God finds evil hateful. Its existence in men is loathsome. The idea is expressed in human language, in which sin and the sinner are considered identical (see Isa. 1:14; see on Ps. 2:4).

6. Snares. Heb. *pachim*, "traps." The translation "coals of fire and brimstone" (RSV) is obtained by an alteration of the Hebrew text, reading *pachame* for *pachim*. Such

changes are mere conjecture. In this instance the LXX supports the Hebrew. There may be an allusion to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24, 28). Compare the destruction of the wicked at Christ's coming (Luke 17:29, 30).

Cup. Figuratively, God holds out to the wicked a cup for them to drink. In ancient Greece punishment was often administered by requiring the victim to drink a poisonous draught. In Scripture the cup often represents the fate of the wicked (see Ps. 75:8; Rev. 14:10; 16:19).

7. Loveth righteousness. The righteous have nothing to fear; they may safely put their trust in God. Thus David resumes the thought begun in v. 1.

His countenance doth behold the upright. This statement may also be translated, "the upright shall behold His face" (see RSV). The godly will be admitted into the very presence of God (see on Ps. 4:6; see also 1 John 3:2; Rev. 22:4).

"Face to face shall I behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by!"

It was this confidence in ultimate fellowship with God in heaven that supported the psalmist's trust in God's daily care.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–5PP 661
4 Ed 132; MH 438; 8T 285
6 GC 672; SR 428

PSALM 12

INTRODUCTION.—Much in the manner of Elijah, who complained that "I, even I only, am left" (1 Kings 19:10), Ps. 12 begins by decrying the general wickedness of society. The prayer of the psalmist for deliverance is speedily answered, and God interposes to protect His own. The eight verses of the psalm make four regular stanzas.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 629.

1. Help, Lord. Or, "Save, Jehovah." The answer to the psalmist's prayer is given in v. 5.

Ceaseth. Like Elijah, the psalmist thinks that no one in the land but him is faithful to God (see 1 Kings 19:10; cf. Micah 7:2). "Faithful" is parallel in meaning to "godly." For the moment, national degeneracy seems well-nigh universal, and the psalmist forgets the "remnant," the "little flock," to which he refers in vs. 5, 7. We should beware of overemphasizing the idea that the devout are always a small minority. Jesus declared, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold" (John 10:16). He has many faithful ones of whom we may know nothing. Compare God's declaration to Elijah (1 Kings 19:18).

2. Vanity. Or, "falsehood."

A double heart. Literally, "heart and a heart." They think one thing and say another. No confidence can be placed in a person who has one heart to speak his words and another heart to conceal his purposes.

3. Proud things. Literally, "great things." Verse 4 reports these proud sayings.

4. Tongue. They use speech to accomplish their evil purposes. They arm themselves with lies and deceit. Instead of using open violence they depend upon their powers of persuasion, and use for ignoble purposes that gift which God designed should bring only blessing to mankind. "Of all the gifts we have received from God, none is capable of

being a greater blessing than this [the gift of speech]" (COL 335). In this gift man should recognize one of his greatest responsibilities.

Our own. Literally, "with us"; on our side, as forces at our command.

Lord over us. To control our use of speech, so as to hold us responsible for the things that we say. Many who admit responsibility for their actions are unwilling to take any responsibility for their words. Such should heed the Saviour's injunction (Matt. 12:37).

5. For. Or, "on account of," "because of." God now proceeds to answer the psalmist's prayer.

Arise. When the proper time comes for God to intervene, after the oppressors have had sufficient opportunity to reveal their evil intentions, God asserts His divine judgment (see Ex. 2:24). The word "arise," spoken of God's coming to judgment to intervene on behalf of His suffering children, is frequent in the psalms (see Ps. 3:7; Ps. 9:19; 10:12).

Puffeth. Compare the use of the word in Ps. 10:5.

6. Pure words. This is a typical wisdom proverb. In contrast with the lies of the wicked referred to in vs. 2–4, the words of God are uttered without any mixture of falsehood.

As silver. The idea is that God's words are perfectly pure, as if, like silver, they had been passed through the fire seven times. In common with its use in other Oriental languages, "seven" is a symbol of perfection, of completeness. O that men's words might be like those of their Maker (see Prov. 10:20; 25:11).

7. Shalt keep them. Those referred to in v. 5, those who are persecuted by deceitful men. God will guard and defend His saints (see Ps. 37).

Preserve them. Literally, "preserve us, or "preserve him," the two forms being identical in the Hebrew vowelless script. If the psalmist had the singular in mind he was placing distinct emphasis on the individual.

Generation. The psalmist here refers to the race of flatterers, oppressors, liars, that were so numerous as to give the impression conveyed in v. 1.

8. Men. Evildoers abound when those who rule over them are corrupt. Corruption penetrates from rulers to those who are ruled by them. In spite of this realistic close to the poem, the general tenor of the psalm is one of confidence that God will defend the innocent.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 5T 80

6 Ed 244; CG 539; 1T 431

PSALM 13

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 13 begins with protest (vs. 1, 2), passes through prayer (vs. 3, 4), and concludes with praise (vs. 5, 6). In it the psalmist, seemingly forsaken of God, despairs over his daily persecution at the hands of the enemy, prays earnestly that God will come to his help, and realizes the answer to his prayer in a fresh measure of faith and hope. The dramatic transition from step to step makes this short poem remarkable. It is probable that David composed this psalm out of the constant trial that he suffered at the hands of Saul. The psalm is an encouraging example of the fact that when good men feel forsaken of God, it is their privilege to cry to Him and realize the sweet assurance of His care.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. How long? In the midst of his troubles, the psalmist breaks out into this human cry. It seems to him that his troubles will never come to an end. This is the natural cry of the Christian who has suffered for a long time without murmuring and finally comes to the place that in his humanity he feels he can endure the suffering no longer. It is under such circumstances that a man may anticipate experiencing the satisfaction that the psalmist expresses at the close of this psalm (vs. 5, 6).

Luther is reported to have said: "Hope despairs and yet despair hopes." The first phase of the psalmist's trouble is his feeling that God has forgotten him (see Ps. 42:9; 44:24). In the rush of speech he cries, "Can this go on forever?" The phrase "how long" occurs four times in vs. 1, 2, introducing four phases of the psalmist's trouble. The second phase is his feeling that God has hidden His face from him (see Ps. 30:7). We can have no greater blessing than the light of God's countenance; when it appears to be withdrawn, we sink in despair. Compare the second clause of the Aaronic blessing, Num. 6:25.

2. Take counsel. Referring to the methods that the psalmist continues to devise in order to escape from his enemy, probably Saul. This is the third phase of his trouble: how long must he continue to plan, to no end but sorrow?

Sorrow. The burden and anxiety of a heart crushed by its own thinking.

Be exalted. This is the fourth phase of the psalmist's trouble. The psalmist now turns from the cry of despair to prayer for relief. When we look *out* into the dark, then we need to look *up* into the light. Let us beware lest the soul's anguish degenerate into impatience. It is not good to let our troubles take our entire attention. Analogously, Bunyan observes: "I perceive it to be an old trick of the devil to set a man athinking too much on his sins."

3. Consider and hear. The "and" is not in the Hebrew. It is more emphatic to say, "Look, hear me." In contrast to v. 1, the psalmist, although feeling that God has forgotten him, nevertheless calls Him "my God."

Lighten mine eyes. "The eye is the light of the soul." It reflects our inner feelings. Prayer is the soul's telescope. It gives true insight.

Sleep of death. Literally, "sleep the death." Death is frequently described as sleep (Job 3:13; 7:21; 14:12; Dan. 12:2; cf. John 11:11; 1 Thess. 4:13, 14).

4. Those that trouble. The psalmist enlarges his prayer to include deliverance from his enemies in general, not only from the one whose pursuit of him is the subject of the psalm. Prayer now gives way to trust.

5. I have trusted. Faithful prayer gains the victory over the depression of vs. 1, 2.

Salvation. The reference is primarily to the rescue from the present troubles.

6. I will sing. A heart full of praise must find expression. For the despairing "How long?" of vs. 1, 2, the psalmist exchanges a song of praise. Out of sadness through supplication he emerges singing. The golden thread of thanksgiving runs throughout the fabric of the psalms.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

6 GW 385; ML 170

PSALM 14

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 14 presents a highly compressed picture of general moral decadence in a godless world, with the assurance that God is with the righteous. The psalm appears again with slight variations as Ps. 53 (see comments there).

On the superscription see p. 616.

1. Fool. Heb. *nabal*, a person deficient either morally or intellectually, or both. The *nabal* here seems to be one who lacks wisdom, a knowledge of moral values, spiritual insight—one who is color blind to moral and religious values—one who is a materialist, judging values by size and power. The best commentary on the "fool" is the book of Proverbs.

There is no God. The fool may profess God for social and business purposes, but "in his heart" there is no room for a belief in God (see Rom. 1:20, 21).

None that doeth good. The picture is one of total depravity, emphasized by the following verses. Sections of vs. 1–3 are quoted by Paul to prove that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin (Rom. 3:10–12).

2. Looked down. A picture of God, contrary to the fool's claims (v. 1), bending over the ramparts of heaven to scrutinize the activities of mortals (see Ps. 102:19). The world seems ripe for judgment, as in Noah's time (see Gen. 6:12; cf. Gen. 11:5; 18:21).

3. Gone aside. That is, from the right path.

Become filthy. Heb. *'alach*, related to an Arabic root used of milk turning sour. The root word is used elsewhere only in Job 15:16 and in the parallel of Ps. 53:3. Verse 3 parallels v. 1.

4. No knowledge. The question of this verse is put into the mouth of God. Is it possible that men are so low in understanding as to think that God can overlook their depravity and not punish them?

My people. The remnant, "the generation of the righteous," of v. 5. The psalmist identifies himself with God's people, his own family, his own friends.

Call not upon the Lord. They do not acknowledge God. Since they do not believe in Him, how can they call upon Him (see Rom. 10:14)? Verse 4 stands parallel to v. 2.

5. There. That is, at the place where they were in the midst of their evildoing. When God arises as a God of judgment, terror seizes them.

Generation of the righteous. God helps and protects those who are righteous in His sight. On "generation," see Ps. 12:7; cf. Ps. 24:6; 73:15. In Ugaritic (see p. 618) the word thus translated also has the meaning "assemblage," or "dwelling." Such may be the meaning here.

6. Poor. The wicked, who do not believe in God, have derided, mocked the plans and purposes of the poor who trust Him.

7. Zion. See on Ps. 2:6. Zion is frequently spoken of as the dwelling of God, from which He rules as sovereign of the world.

Bringeth back the captivity. This phrase does not necessarily refer to a specific literal captivity. The Hebrews were often in a state of exile (see Judges), and this language came to be the common method of expressing a restoration from a condition of oppression or a low state of religious values (see Job 42:10; Eze. 16:53; Hosea 6:11; Amos 9:14).

Jacob. This name is frequently combined with "Israel" (see Ps. 78:21, 71; 105:23). "Jacob" is another name for the Hebrew people, occurring throughout the OT (see Isa. 2:3; Amos 7:2). On "Israel," see on Gen. 32:28. Beginning with a picture of universal godlessness, the psalm closes with a protestation of hope in ultimate salvation for Israel.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 COL 258; GC 275

PSALM 15

INTRODUCTION.—Perhaps next to Ps. 23, Ps. 15 is the best known and most generally appreciated of the psalms. It is called The Good Citizen and God's Gentleman, and is the most complete statement of the ideal man to be found in the Psalter. The Talmud says that the 613 commandments of the Pentateuch are all summarized in this psalm. In structure, the first verse and the second sentence of v. 5 constitute a kind of envelopment, in which the virtues of the ideal man are enclosed in concrete detail.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Lord. The psalm begins with the idea of God as host. What kind of guests does God want in His house? Eleven particulars are given in answer to the question (see Ps. 24:3–5; Isa. 33:13–16; Zech. 8:16, 17).

Abide. Literally, "sojourn." The word means, not staying, but sojourning only for a little while, as a guest.

Dwell. The second half of the verse carries the temporary idea over into that of permanence. What guest is qualified to become a permanent part of God's household?

Thy holy hill. See on Ps. 2:6. The elevation suggested by the phrase implies the elevation of the perfect character above the low places of ordinary character. The character pleasing to God and man must climb above the commonplace.

2. Walketh uprightly. Verses 2–5 answer the parallel questions of v. 1 in specific instances; first, positively (v. 2); then negatively (vs. 3–5). The Heb. *tamim*, translated "uprightly," means "complete," "whole," "without defect." God bade Abraham, one of the ideal characters of the OT, to be *tamim* (Gen. 17:1). God holds the same high goal before the Christian (Matt. 5:48), and promises aid for the realization of the goal (see Ed 18, 19).

Worketh righteousness. See 1 John 3:6–10.

In his heart. The true Christian is absolutely sincere in the language he uses. His religion has its seat in his heart and speaks truthfully from his lips (see Prov. 4:23).

This verse is a general answer to the question of v. 1. The answer lies, not in forms and ceremonies, but in character demonstrated in noble action.

3. Backbiteth. Heb. *ragal*, "to slander." Compare James 3:2–11. Jewish tradition considered the slanderer as one who denied the existence of God. The Talmud says: "I [God] and he [the slanderer] cannot dwell together in the world."

Nor doeth evil. He does no harm to his neighbor. "Neighbor" may refer to anyone with whom we have to do.

Taketh up a reproach. He does not originate a reproach against his neighbor, he is slow to believe evil about him, and he refuses to spread abroad accusations against his character. He lives according to the golden rule (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 7:12). This verse gives three specific instances in the negative following the positive generalizations of v. 2.

4. Contemned. Meaning "despised"; not to be confused with "condemned," meaning "convicted of guilt." The ideal man properly evaluates others, reading their true nature. He does not whitewash evil. While he does not take up evil falsely against a man (v. 3), he is disposed to do justice to all. He is level-headed in his judgments. "What a revolution would be created in any society by the carrying out of such principles!" (Davison).

He honoureth. Irrespective of rank or color or other conditions that distinguish men, he honors the true followers of God. He places real religion in a fellow man above the accidents of birth or position.

Fear. Heb. *yara'*, "show reverence for." This "fear" is the beginning of wisdom (Ps. 111:10; Prov. 9:10).

To his own hurt. When he has made a promise or has entered into a contract that may turn out to his own hurt, he still remains true to his pledged word. "His word is as good as his bond."

5. Usury. Heb. *neshek*, "interest," but not unlawful or excessive interest, that is, "usury," as we would say. The Hebrews were forbidden to take interest of the poor, especially poor Israelites (Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:35–37; Deut. 23:19), but were allowed to take interest of strangers (see Deut. 23:20). This distinction appears to have been drawn because the Hebrews were regarded as brethren in a nation. It would be unbrotherly to charge a brother interest. Obedience to this ethical ideal constitutes a high level of character.

Nor taketh reward. That is, he does not accept bribes. He does not enrich himself at the expense of the unfortunate. Taking a bribe is forbidden (see Ex. 23:8; Deut. 16:19; cf. Prov. 17:23). Good government exists only where there is impartial justice. Bribery destroys good government.

Never be moved. This is the answer, in brief finality, to the questions of v. 1. The man who has the traits of character exhibited in vs. 2–5 is fit to be the guest of God. Standing on a sure foundation, he can "never be moved." "How firm a foundation!" (see Matt. 7:24, 25; cf. Ps. 16:8).

Such are the qualities of the true Christian in the sight of God and man.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–5 2T 307; 5T 615; 8T 84
1, 2 ML 265; FE 402
1–3 5T 58
2, 3 Ed 236
2–4 Ed 141
3 2T 466
4 PP 506
5 AA 475; Ed 229; PK 83

PSALM 16

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 16 is an expression of complete happiness such as springs from complete submission to God. The psalmist progresses from the thought of God as his sole protector to a declaration of faith in life everlasting, a declaration rarely so clearly expressed in the OT. The last verses of the psalm have Messianic import. Six fairly regular stanzas make up the structure of the poem. Some suggest as a special occasion for the background of the psalm, the experience recorded in 1 Sam. 26:19, but this is only speculation. On the Davidic authorship of the psalm see Acts 2:25; cf. AA 227.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Preserve me. The psalm begins with an earnest, trustful prayer. The psalmist is not crying for help in time of danger. He simply prays for continued care.

Put my trust. Or, "take refuge."

2. O my soul. The phrase does not appear in the Hebrew. It is inserted because in the Hebrew the verb for "thou hast said" is feminine. If the verb form is correct, "feminine of address" must be understood. However, several Hebrew manuscripts, supported by the

LXX, have the verb in the first person, thus permitting the simple translation, "I said to the Lord," etc.

My Lord. The Hebrew word used here is not *Yahweh*, but *'Adonai,* "my Master" (see Vol. I, p. 35).

My goodness extendeth not to thee. Literally, "my good not upon thee." The meaning of the Hebrew phrase thus translated is not clear. The RSV translation, "I have no good apart from thee," is based on the interpretive translation of the Targums and Jerome. Perhaps the psalmist meant, "God is the source of all my good, and therefore the only object of my trust and devotion."

3. Saints. Heb. *qedoshim*, literally, "holy ones." Holiness is godlikeness (see Lev. 19:2). God's people, obedient to His law and wearing the robe of Christ's righteousness, should rejoice that God calls them His saints. David takes delight in associating with the saints. They are God's excellent men—God's true nobility. Love to God is the surest bond of unity among God's people (see Ps. 55:14; 133).

4. Sorrows. Those who choose another god than Jehovah will have continued sorrow, whereas the psalmist receives only good from the one true God.

Drink offerings of blood. Whereas wine was used as a "drink offering" in the worship of Jehovah (Ex. 29:40; Num. 15:5, 7), this phrase seems to imply that the blood of animals was used for a similar purpose by the heathen. To the Hebrew this was a repulsive idea (see Gen. 9:4; Lev. 3:17; 7:26). David would have no part whatsoever in the worship of heathen gods. He would not even soil his lips by mentioning their names.

5. Inheritance. Compare Num. 18:20. In the same manner that God was the inheritance of Levi rather than land, when the land of Canaan was allotted to the tribes, so the psalmist maintains that God is his inheritance. Well may the Christian thus place his trust in God. Let our prayer be: "None on earth but Thee."

My cup. My lot or condition in life (see Ps. 11:6). In Ugaritic literature (see p. 618) "cup" has the meaning "fate," or "destiny." The psalmist's thirst finds satisfaction only in God.

Maintainest. Probably from the Heb. *tamak*, "to hold fast."

My lot. Compare Num. 26:55. The psalmist may have had in mind the apportioning of the land of Canaan by lot.

6. Lines. Heb. *chabalim*, "lengths of rope for measuring and allotting a field." Since God had chosen the psalmist's portion, it was the choicest.

Goodly heritage. The "inheritance" of v. 5. This realization causes the psalmist to break out into the thanksgiving of the following verses.

7. Reins. See on Ps. 7:9. The inmost feelings tell of God.

In the night. In the quiet of the night God speaks to man's heart with peculiar sweetness (see Ps. 4:4).

8. I have set. Peter interprets vs. 8–10 and Paul v. 10 as prophetic of the resurrection of Christ in the flesh (Acts 2:25–31; 13:35–37). As such, this part of the psalm is definitely Messianic. In Christ's deliverance from the tomb and in His resurrection the full meaning of these verses became clear. On the resurrection of Jesus, see Luke 24:39; John 20:27.

Always before me. In David's eyes, God was no mere abstraction, but a Person actually at his side. Enoch walked with God (Gen. 5:22; see 5T 596; 8T 329–331). Moses

kept a vision of God before him (see 5T 652). We need a consciousness of the constant presence of God. Not only will a sense of God's presence be a deterrent to sinning, but it will gladden the heart, brighten the life, and give meaning to circumstances.

At my right hand. The phrase, applied both to man and to God, is especially common in Psalms. The position is one of honor and dignity, defense and protection. Here the latter is intended.

Shall not be moved. See Ps. 15:5. The Christian may well rejoice because he is standing on the Rock of Ages.

9. Glory. Heb. *kabod*, "honor," "reputation." The LXX reads "tongue," which is also the reading of Acts 2:26. David is the most exuberant of singers. Every fiber of his being praises God. His life on earth is a foretaste of his life to come, in heaven. "The melody of praise is the atmosphere of heaven" (Ed 161).

Rest. Heb. *shakan*, "settle down," "dwell," "settle down to abide."

10. Leave. Heb. *'azab*, "abandon." The sentence reads literally, "Thou wilt not abandon my soul to *she'ol*."

Soul. Heb. *nephesh*, a word occurring 755 times in the OT, 144 times in the psalms, most frequently translated "soul." This translation is unfortunate, for "soul" conveys to many English readers ideas that do not properly belong to *nephesh*. A brief analysis of the Hebrew word will help to clarify what the Bible writers meant when they used this word.

Nephesh comes from the root *naphash*, a verb occurring only three times in the OT (Ex. 23:12; 31:17; 2 Sam. 16:14), each time meaning "to revive oneself" or "to refresh oneself." The verb seems to go back to the basic meaning of breathing.

A definition for *nephesh* may be derived from the Bible account of the creation of man (Gen. 2:7). The record declares that when God gave life to the body He had formed, the man literally "became a soul of life." The "soul" had not previously existed, but came into existence at the creation of Adam. A new soul comes into existence every time a child is born. Each birth represents a new unit of life uniquely different and separate from other similar units. The new unit can never merge into another unit. It will always be itself. There may be countless individuals like it but none that *is* actually that unit. This uniqueness of individuality seems to be the idea emphasized in the Hebrew term *nephesh*.

Nephesh is applied not only to men but also to animals. The clause, "let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life" (Gen. 1:20), is literally, "let the waters swarm swarms of souls of life [individuals of life]." Beasts and fowl are called "living creatures" literally, "souls of life," better, "individuals of life" (Gen. 2:19). Hence animals as well as human beings are "souls."

This basic idea of "soul" being the individual rather than a constituent part of the individual, seems to underlie the various occurrences of *nephesh*. It is therefore better to say a certain person or a certain animal *is* a soul than to say he or it *has* a soul.

From the basic idea of a *nephesh* being an individual, or a person, springs the idiomatic use of *nephesh* for the personal pronoun. Expressions like "my soul" are idiomatic for "I," "me"; "thy soul" for "you"; "their soul" for "they," "them."

Since each new *nephesh* represents a new unit of life, *nephesh* is often used synonymously with "life". In 119 instances the KJV translates *nephesh* by "life," and there are other instances where "life" would have been a more accurate translation (see on 1 Kings 17:21).

The majority of the occurrences of *nephesh* may be appropriately translated by "person," "individual," "life," or by the appropriate personal pronoun. "The souls that they had gotten in Haran" (Gen. 12:5) is simply "the persons that they had gotten in Haran." "My soul shall live because of thee" (Gen. 12:13) is simply, "I shall live because of thee." "That soul shall be cut off" (Lev. 19:8) is simply, "he shall be cut off."

Hell. Heb. *she'ol*, the figurative dwelling place of the dead, where those who have departed from this life are represented as sleeping together (see on Prov. 15:11). See the fulfillment of this prediction in the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:25–31). On principles of OT prophetic interpretation, see on Deut. 18:15.

Holy One. Heb. *chasid*, frequently translated "saint" (see Ps. 30:4; 31:23; 50:5; 79:2; etc.; see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

Corruption. Heb. *shachath*. "Pit," as the word is frequently translated (Job 33:18, 24, 28, 30; etc.); *shachath* is also translated "ditch" (Job 9:31), "corruption" (Job 17:14), "grave" (Job 33:22), "destruction" (Ps. 55:23).

11. Shew me. Literally, "cause me to know."

Path of life. The path that leads to life.

Fulness of joy. Enough and more than enough to satisfy God's child (see Eph. 3:20).

At thy right hand. Or, "in Thy right [hand]." God's hand is full, ready to bestow eternal pleasures upon His child. This store of pleasure will never be exhausted. It is coeternal with the Infinite (see 1 Cor. 2:9; GC 674–678; Ed 301–309).

This psalm is a beautiful expression of the soul's choice of God, its delight in Him, its repudiation of other gods, its comfort in the lot that God assigns, and its calm assurance of His help now and forever.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4 GC 310
6 ML 359
8 CH 424; GW 258, 417; MH 510; SC 74
7T 213
8, 9 ML 153
9, 10 AA 227
11 AH 513; ML 5, 32, 211, 292, 349; 2T 480

PSALM 17

INTRODUCTION.—Often beset by enemies, the psalmist frequently poured out his soul in earnest appeal to God. Ps. 17 is one of these prayers for vindication of the righteous. In

it David (see PP 452; 5T 397) asserts confidence in his appeal, prays to be kept in an evil world, and muses on his ultimate satisfaction in seeing God face to face.

On the superscription see p. 616.

1. The right. Or, "justice." Since David is confident that right is on his side, he can ask God for help.

Cry. Heb. *rinnah*, used both of a cry of joy (Isa. 14:7; 35:10; 44:23; etc.) and of a cry of entreaty (1 Kings 8:28; Isa. 43:14; Jer. 7:16).

Feigned lips. Literally, "lips of deceit."

2. Sentence. David appeals to God to vindicate him against his enemies.

Things that are equal. Or, "uprightness." As a fair judge, God discerns equity in all men, saints and sinners.

3. Proved. Or, "tried," "tested." Here David maintains that God has tested him and found him innocent.

In the night. Under cover of night, men plot evil (see Ps. 36:4).

Tried. Heb. *ṣaraph*, "to refine," "to melt," "to smelt," as metal is purified in the fire.

Mouth. See James 3:2. David's resolution influenced both thought and deed.

4. The word of thy lips. Not by his own strength, but by heeding God's Word, David had kept himself from sin (see Ps. 119:9).

5. Thy paths. In contrast to the "paths of the destroyer" (v. 4).

Slip not. Or, "be caused to totter." When we find ourselves in a plight such as the psalmist's, it is well to pray that we may be "stedfast, unmoveable" (1 Cor. 15:58). One cherished sin may set us sliding (see PP 452). Only pure principles can hold us (see 5T 397).

6. Thou wilt hear. In complete faith, David continues his prayer. He knows that God hears.

Speech. Oral, not mental, prayer. The earnestness of this prayer is proof that the former part of the psalm is not a mere self-righteous boast.

7. Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness. Or, "make thy favors distinguished."

O thou that savest. It is impossible to read the psalms without feeling the presence of the Saviour in the psalmist's prayers (see Ps. 106:21; cf. Isa. 19:20; 49:26). David knew his Redeemer.

8. Apple of the eye. Heb. *'ishon*, literally, "a little man." The term is applied to the pupil of the eye, probably because, as in a mirror, one sees a tiny image of himself. The prayer is that God will guard the psalmist as a man protects his eyesight. Compare a similar figure in Deut. 32:10 and Prov. 7:2.

Shadow of thy wings. This phrase, common in the psalms, suggests a mother bird protecting her young. Compare a similar figure in Deut. 32:11, 12 and Matt. 23:37.

10. Fat. Heb. *cheleb*, probably originally the fat of the midriff, from a conjectural root *chalab*, "to cover." From this some have assumed that *chalab* here represents the seat of the emotions. Hence the RSV translation, "they close their hearts to pity." Self-indulgence hardens men's feelings, making them indifferent to human suffering.

11. They have set. The clause reads, literally, "their eyes they set to cast in the earth." A parallel may be seen in Saul and his companions, who, like men hunting their prey, kept their eyes closely directed along the paths that David and his companions had taken.

12. Like as a lion. The psalmist's pursuers were, like lions, ready to spring upon their prey (see on Ps. 10:8, 9). The verse is a significant instance of synonymous parallelism, the second half repeating and embellishing the thought of the first half.

13. Disappoint him. Rather, "confront him."

Cast him down. Literally, "cause him to bow down."

Soul. See on Ps. 16:10.

Which is thy sword. The grammatical construction allows the translation "with thy sword."

14. Which are thy hand. The grammatical construction allows the translation "by the hand."

In this life. Such men find the end of their existence in material gratification. Sensual enjoyment is the height of their ambition and their only hope of reward (see Luke 6:24; 16:25). Therefore they make everything subordinate to their present interests, and leave God entirely out of their reckoning.

Fillest with thy hid treasure. With respect to the object for which they live, the wicked are successful. They live only for this world, and are prosperous in the things of this world. The future life is not in their thinking. They have forfeited eternal satisfaction for merely temporal gratification. Herein lies a partial answer to one of the deepest questions of philosophy: "Why do the wicked prosper?" Their prosperity is but for the moment of this fleeting life; it is therefore inconsequential compared with the eternal prosperity of the righteous.

Children. The Oriental considered children a blessing—the greater the number, the greater the blessing (see Ps. 127:3–5). Contrariwise, there could be no greater misfortune than to have no children (see Gen. 30:1).

Rest of their substance. They have enough for themselves, and to leave as an inheritance for their children. For a picture of worldly prosperity, see Job 21:7–11.

15. As for me. In sharp contrast to the worlding. Instead of envying the transient pleasures of the wicked, the psalmist longs for the joy of seeing God face to face (see on Ps. 16:10, 11; see also on Ps. 13:1). Fellowship with God, communion with the Creator, is the highest satisfaction of the devout soul. To be like God in moral nature is man's loftiest hope (see 1 John 3:2). The elements of 1 John 3:2 are found in Ps. 17:15—supreme satisfaction, great transformation, enlarged vision (see Matt. 5:8; Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:21; Rev. 22:4). By this statement the psalmist provides indisputable proof that he believes in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and the reality of the future life.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4 CT 121; DA 123; Ed 190; MH 181; Te 107; 6T 259

5 PP 452; 5T 397; 7T 210

15 MM 244; PK 264

PSALM 18

INTRODUCTION.—In the magnificent ode of thanksgiving which appears in the Psalter as Ps. 18, David recounts in broad outline the story of the marvelous deliverances and victories that God had given him. This commemorative Song of Triumph is heart history, the story of a human heart ever devoted to God and sincere in its integrity in the things of God. That the hymn was composed by David is confirmed by the account in 2 Sam. 22, where the poem, with some variations, also appears.

On the superscription, "To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said," see p. 616; see also PP 715, 716. The phrase "the servant of the Lord" (found also in the superscription of Ps. 36) does not occur in 2 Sam. 22. On the entire psalm compare the comments on 2 Sam. 22.

1. I will love. Heb. *racham*, denoting deep and fervent affection. Elsewhere *racham* is not used of man's love to God, but frequently of God's love to man. The statement is a fitting introduction to this triumphant psalm of rejoicing. This verse does not appear in 2 Sam. 22. Compare Ps. 116:1–4.

Strength. God was the source of the psalmist's strength (see Ps. 27:1; 28:8).

2. Rock. Heb. *sela'*, "a mountain crag," "a cliff." David had once found refuge in such a crag when chased by Saul (see 1 Sam. 23:25). Here he applies the word to God, the sure refuge.

Fortress. Heb. *meṣudah*, "a place difficult to approach," or, "a stronghold" (see 1 Sam. 22:4).

Strength. Heb. *ṣur*, "a large rock," used descriptively of God five times in Deut. 32 (vs. 4, 15, 18, 30, 31).

Buckler. Heb. *magen*, translated "shield" in Ps. 3:3 and in the parallel passage of 2 Sam. 22:3.

Horn. A symbol of strength (see Deut. 33:17).

High tower. 2 Sam. 22:3 adds "my saviour; thou savest me from violence." By this galaxy of figures, taken from the ceaseless struggles of his life, David endeavors to portray all that God has been to him in his earthly pilgrimage. For similar profusion of imagery in addressing God, see Ps. 31:1–3; 71:1–7. David is exuberant in his praise.

4. Sorrows. Heb. *chabalim*, "ropes," "cords." 2 Sam. 22:5 has "waves."

Of death. David said to Jonathan: "There is but a step between me and death" (1 Sam. 20:3).

Ungodly men. Heb. *beliyya'al*, meaning "worthlessness," but frequently translated "Belial." "Sons of Belial" is a common Biblical phrase denoting men of base character who resort to violence (see on Judges 19:22; 1 Sam. 2:12).

5. Sorrows. Heb. *chabalim*, "cords" as in v. 4.

Hell. Heb. *she'ol*. See on Ps. 16:10; Prov. 15:11.

Snares. Heb. *moqshim*, "bird traps."

Prevented. Heb. *qadam*, "confronted," the original meaning of our English word (from the Latin: *prae*, "before," and *venio*, "come").

6. Temple. Heaven (see Ps. 11:4).

Into his ears. God heard his cry.

7. The earth shook. The divine intervention, in answer to David's prayer, is depicted in a magnificent description of an upheaval of nature, the details of which were doubtless taken from the psalmist's recollection of many a tempest that he had seen in the dangerous periods of his life. In its wealth of furious imagery, resting heavily upon the

imagery of the deliverance at the Red Sea and the giving of the law at Sinai, this description is one of the most sublime in literature. Compare Ex. 19:16–18; Ps. 144:5–7; Hab. 3:3–6, but note that the image is nowhere so fully carried out as in Ps. 18. The description begins with the earthquake, continues with lightning, clouds, wind, and darkness, and concludes with the full outburst of storm, in the midst of which Jehovah is revealed in all His glory and power to discomfit His enemies and save His trusting servant. As God showed the greatness of His power in the cataclysms of nature, so He came down in the fullness of His strength to intervene in the time of His servant's peril.

Wroth. See on Ps. 2:4.

8. Smoke. The smoke, fire, and coals describe the clouds and lightning. One should not endeavor to shape these figures into a concrete form as if God appeared in a visible way. Rather, the poet's aim is vividly to impress men with a profound sense of awe, as if in the presence of the Omnipotent (see Ps. 74:1; 97:2; 140:10; cf. Hab. 3:5).

9. Came down. God seemed to come down in the storm, to investigate and execute judgment (see Gen. 11:5; 18:21).

Darkness. See Deut. 4:11; 1 Kings 8:12.

10. Cherub. Cherubim guarded the entrance to Eden (see on Gen. 3:24), and figures of them overshadowed the mercy seat (Ex. 25:18).

Wings of the wind. An expression denoting great rapidity.

11. Dark waters. Literally, "darkness of waters." Black clouds presaging a heavy rainfall.

Thick clouds of the skies. The phrase might be paraphrased "clouds of clouds," as if to suggest different kinds of clouds rolled together, inrolling and piled on one another—all constituting the pavilion of God.

12. At the brightness. When the lightning played, the clouds seemed to vanish and the whole sky seemed to be afire.

13. In the heavens. The preposition "in," Heb. *be*, should here be translated "from," according to a usage demonstrated in Ugaritic literature (see pp. 618, 619).

Gave his voice. The thunder represents the voice of God, as suggested in the parallel structure of the verse (see Ps. 29, especially v. 3; cf. Job 40:9).

Hail stones and coals of fire. Repeated from v. 12, as if, by repetition, to emphasize the awful impression.

14. Arrows. Lightnings, as indicated by the parallelism of the verse.

Them. Probably refers to the enemies of the psalmist, as the first intrusion of the human element in the awful description, recalling us for an instant to the theme of the poem.

15. Channels. Compare the picture in Ex. 15:8.

16. He sent from above. All the manifestations of divine intervention came from God.

He drew me out. The Hebrew verb here employed is used of the rescue of Moses and is probably the root of Moses' name (see on Ex. 2:10). Possibly David thus likened his experience in being delivered from his enemies to that of Moses' rescue by the hand of Pharaoh's daughter. He is pulled like a drowning man from the waters.

Many waters. Here the poet probably reverts to the image of v. 4, where he portrayed himself as terrorized by "the floods of ungodly men." Waters are often used as the symbol of danger (see Ps. 32:6).

17. Enemy. Saul. In the same breath the psalmist includes Saul's supporters who joined in the pursuit.

18. Prevented. See on v. 5.

Stay. Heb. *mish'an*, "support." A closely related word, *mish'eneth*, is translated "staff" in Ps. 23:4 (see comment there).

19. A large place. In place of being hemmed in by his enemies, David has ample room to move about unhampered (see on Ps. 4:1).

He delighted in me. The first hint of the reason for the psalmist's deliverance. The thought is expanded in vs. 20–30.

20. According to my righteousness. God intervened because David did not deserve the treatment he was receiving at the hands of Saul and his other enemies. God rewards and recompenses according to His eternal law. Verses 20–30 enlarge on the reason for God's delivering David.

22. Before me. David maintains that he kept God's law always before him and regulated his conduct according to its demands (see Ps. 119:97; see on Ps. 1:2; cf. Deut. 6:6–9; 11:18–21).

23. Upright. Heb. *tamim*, "complete," "perfect." See on Ps. 15:2, where the same word is translated "uprightly." In Job 1:1 a related word, *tam*, is rendered "perfect." Although a very strong assertion, David seems, in the light of v. 22, to mean that he endeavors to avoid all known sin. Consider David's testimony of himself (1 Sam. 26:23, 24), God's testimony (1 Kings 14:8), and the testimony of the historian (1 Kings 15:5). For David's claim to innocence from known sin to be true, the psalm must have been written before his sin with Bath-sheba and his crime of ordering the death of Uriah.

24. According to my righteousness. This verse is almost a repetition of v. 20.

25. With the merciful. Verses 25, 26 exhibit the characteristics of proverbs. They express the generalization that the eternal God deals with men according to their character. God's "attitude towards men is and must be conditioned by their attitude toward Him" (Kirkpatrick). With God sin never goes unpunished (see Matt. 18:35).

26. Froward. The crooked, the perverse (the word is *not* "forward").

27. High looks. Pride paves the way to destruction (see Ps. 101:5; Prov. 6:16, 17). The equivalent of this part of the verse in 2 Sam. 22:28 is "thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down."

29. Troop. See on 2 Sam. 22:30.

Leaped over a wall. See on 2 Sam. 22:30.

30. Perfect. What God does is right (see Deut. 32:4).

Tried. Refined, like metal; tested (see on Ps. 12:6).

Buckler. See on Ps. 3:3; 18:2. God protects those who trust in Him. No others have the right to claim His protection.

31. Who is God? Beginning with this verse David dwells on the victories and successes that God had given him. The thought is continued through v. 45. The question, "Who is God?" is not a question of unbelief but a rhetorical question implying the reality of Israel's God as compared with the false gods of the heathen about them.

Rock. Heb. *ṣur*, the word translated "strength" in v. 2 (see comments there).

33. Like hinds' feet. Hinds are noted for speed and sure-footedness (see on 2 Sam. 22:34).

34. Teacheth my hands to war. See on 2 Sam. 22:35. On the general problem of Israel's engaging in war see Additional Note on Joshua 6, Vol. II, pp. 199–204.

A bow of steel. Literally, "a bow of bronze." This type of bow is mentioned also in Job 20:24. God gave David extraordinary strength.

35. Shield. More effective than the bow of steel (v. 34) is the protection of the shield of God. David recognizes the importance of the union of human and divine effort. God arms His servant with material means of protection and then gives him support as he employs these means. We are reminded of the old Puritan counsel: "Trust in God and keep your powder dry." David cannot know defeat when God's right hand supports him as he holds the bow.

Gentleness. Heb. *'anawah*, literally, "humility." This characteristic found its supreme expression in the incarnation and the death on the cross (Phil. 2:7, 8). "The King of glory stooped low to take humanity" (DA 43). Man never climbs higher and nearer God than when he stoops in humility. This is true greatness.

36. Enlarged my steps. Compare v. 19.

Slip. See Ps. 17:5; cf. Prov. 4:12. It is important to have a firm hold when grappling with an enemy.

37. Pursued. Compare Ex. 15:9. The verbs in vs. 37 and 38 are in the imperfect tense, permitting a translation into the English present. The pictures thus become graphic: "I pursue …" etc. The succession of actions in vs. 37–45 gives an impression of complete victory. Because of God's intervention, the enemy is finally and fully overthrown.

38. Wounded. Heb. *machas*, which, according to Ugaritic (see pp. 618, 619), may also mean "to smite," "to smash."

41. Even unto the Lord. As a last resort, they cried to Israel's God. Men appeal to everything else before they appeal to God. Since such an appeal springs from terror and does not come from a sincere heart, it cannot be heard.

42. Beat them small. The enemy is entirely crushed (see 2 Kings 13:7) and thrown aside like refuse.

43. The head of the heathen. David was acknowledged to be the ranking king among the nations of that part of the world (2 Sam. 8). The leading position of Israel among the nations is more clearly seen in the descriptions of the kingdom inherited from David by his son Solomon (1 Kings 4:21, 24).

45. Fade away. Wither, like plants (see Isa. 40:7).

Close places. Fortified cities or fortresses. Other nations shall come trembling and surrender to David of their own choice, thus giving ultimate security to the kingdom and final deliverance from enemies. The victory is complete.

46. The Lord liveth. Verses 46–50 are a solemn ascription of praise and thanksgiving to Jehovah, who has brought David the victory (see PP 715, 716). In view of all that God has done, the psalmist has ample reason for affirming that there is a living God, in contrast with the lifeless gods of the heathen. God's life is the source of man's life.

Rock. Heb. *ṣur* (see on vs. 2, 31).

God of my salvation. A favorite phrase in the psalms (see Ps. 25:5; 27:9; 51:14; cf. Ps. 38:22; 88:1).

48. The violent man. Possibly Saul, but David may be speaking of his enemies in general.

49. Heathen. Heb. *goyim*, "nations" (see on Ps. 2:1; 9:59). The conquests of David exalted the name of Israel's God before the nations.

This verse is quoted by Paul (Rom. 15:9) as proof that the salvation of God is for Gentile as well as Jew. Because of the failure of David's descendants the predictions of vs. 49, 50 will see their fulfillment only in Christ's spiritual kingdom, which shall never cease.

50. Deliverance. In the Hebrew the word is plural, referring to the many acts of salvation listed in the psalm.

To his king. The king chosen of God to rule over Israel, as was David, God's anointed (see on Ps. 2:2).

His seed. On the eventual fulfillment of these promises in the life of Christ see on 2 Sam. 7:12–16.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

6 Te 41

35 AH 34; COL 235; DA 437; Ev 639; FE 284; ML 53; TM 104

46–50PP 715

PSALM 19

INTRODUCTION.—"Nature and revelation alike testify of God's love" (SC 9). This statement might well be the motto of Ps. 19. The psalm is perhaps the best known and most popular of the nature psalms. It is a grateful meditation of God's revelation of Himself in the world of nature and in His law. In the first six verses of the psalm David (see 4T 15) speaks of God's glory as seen in His created works; in vs. 7–10 he speaks of God's glory as shown in the law; in vs. 11–13 he discusses the bearing of these truths on character and conduct; and in v. 14 he prays to be kept free from sin. One can almost see the author standing under the open sky at sunrise, praising Jehovah in the exalted strains of this psalm. The philosopher Kant may have been thinking of Ps. 19 when he wrote: "There are two things that fill my soul with holy reverence and ever-growing wonder—the spectacle of the starry sky that virtually annihilates us as physical beings, and the moral law which raises us to infinite dignity as intelligent agents." Joseph Addison's Creation Hymn, "The Spacious Firmament," is a free expanded paraphrase of the ideas of Ps. 19. The first verses of the psalm are the theme of the chorus, "The Heavens Are Telling," of Haydn's inspired oratorio *The Creation,* at the close of Part One.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Heavens. The material heavens as they appear to our eyes—the region of the sun, moon, and stars (see Gen. 1:1, 8, 9, 14, 16, 17, 20).

Glory. Wisdom, power, skill, benevolence—the things that constitute God's glory. A glimpse at the open sky with the naked eye is sufficient to impress upon the beholder a sense of the glory of God. How much greater is that revelation when the heavens are scrutinized through modern high-powered telescopes.

God. Heb. *'El* (see Vol. I, p. 171).

Firmament. Heb. *raqia'* (see on Gen. 1:6). The English word "firmament" comes from the Latin *firmamentum,* the Vulgate rendering of *raqia'*. *Firmamentum*, literally, "a support", corresponds to the Gk. *stereoma*, the LXX rendering of *raqia'*. The translation, *stereoma*, may have come from the idea anciently held that the heavens are a solid, firm

concave. By their splendor and order the heavens disprove evolution. They are not the work of chance, but the creation of God. Their beauty and arrangement argue God's existence. Through them God may be discerned even by the heathen, "so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:19, 20). Through His created works, God speaks to heathen hearts (DA 638). This thought is amplified in vs. 2–4.

2. Day unto day. Each day passes on to the next day the story of God's might. One is impressed with the endless continuance of the testimony: without pause or change the wonderful story goes on.

Uttereth. Literally, "cause to bubble forth."

Night unto night. In the second half of the parallelism of this verse the idea of endlessness is emphasized. Concerning the orbs of the night sky, see on Ps. 8:3.

3. Where their voice is not heard. Rather, omit the supplied word "where." The idea is that, despite the fact that the heavens have a language of their own (see vs. 1, 2), their voice is inaudible; it does not speak to the ear, but to the understanding heart. Addison sang:

"What though in solemn silence all
Move round this dark terrestrial ball? …
In reason's ear they all rejoice
And utter forth a glorious voice."

4. Line. Heb. *qaw*, "measuring line," used to determine boundaries. The LXX has *phthoggos*, "sound," or "speech," perhaps reading *qol* instead of *qaw*; hence the RSV translation "voice." If the first meaning is accepted, the line designates only the worldwide extent of the message of God's creation. If the second meaning is accepted, as the parallelism of *qaw* with the Hebrew word translated "words" in the second part of the verse suggests, the inarticulate but clearly understood voice of v. 3 is emphasized. "To the Hebrew the world seemed filled with the music of a mighty orchestra, whose music was a kind of inarticulate Te Deum of praise to the Creator and Preserver of its life" (Baldwin). Paul quotes this verse in part to illustrate the worldwide progress of the gospel (Rom. 10:18).

Through. Heb. *be*, translated "to" in the following phrase. In both instances it should probably be rendered "from" in harmony with Ugaritic usage (see pp. 618, 619). The entire passage may be translated, "From all the earth comes forth their cry, from the end of the world their words."

In them. In the heavens.

Tabernacle. Heb. *'ohel*, "tent." The psalmist here introduces the sun into his splendid picture of the heavens, not as an object of worship but as one of the things God has made. Figuratively, he personifies the sun as a splendid being passing the day in the tent in the sky that his Creator has provided. The last clause of v. 4 really belongs with v. 5. Compare Hab. 3:11.

5. Bridegroom. The figure of the sun coming out of his chamber like a bridegroom suggests the ultimate in vitality, brightness, and happiness (see Isa. 61:10; Isa. 62:5). The sun comes out of his chamber (beneath the horizon), where he spends the night, and bursts forth at dawn, lighting up his glorious "tabernacle."

Strong man. The figure changes. As a "strong man" goes eagerly into the race, the sun rises at dawn to run the long day's journey (see 1 Cor. 9:24–27).

6. Going forth. In poetic language David portrays the motion of the sun as it appears to him. He is not writing a merely scientific treatise. The verse attempts to describe the extent and completeness of the sun's movements from dawn to evening.

Nothing hid. Although many things may be concealed from the light of the sun, its heat (the vital force from which the earth gets its life and energy) penetrates everywhere.

7. The law of the Lord. At this point David turns from his contemplation of nature, revealing in its grandeur, permanence, and purpose the glory of God, to the contemplation of the even clearer revelation of God in the law. Beautiful as the manifestations of God's glory in the heavens may be; magnificent as the splendor of the sun, moon, and stars may appear; still more beautiful, more magnificent, is the picture of a character directed by God's law. "The glory of God is most fully seen in a perfectly harmonious character" (Cheyne).

A change in the meter of the Hebrew lines is here introduced. The lines are longer than those of vs. 1–6, and, like the meter of Lamentations, each exhibits two parts, the first longer than the second, in the nature of a long crescendo in music followed by a shorter and more rapid decrescendo; for example, "The law of the LORD is perfect" (long), "converting the soul" (short). "The testimony of the LORD is sure" (long), "making wise the simple" (short). The impression is one of almost breathless haste, slowing down to a pause as the poem proclaims the joy and sweetness of the law and announces the fact that obedience brings a "great reward" (v. 11).

It would be difficult to find more nearly perfect examples of Hebrew parallelism than those of vs. 7–10. In both grammatical and logical structure the component parts of the parallel clauses of the several couplets are remarkably arranged. The KJV translation almost perfectly conveys to the English reader the beauty and order of the original Hebrew structure.

The following table shows the inclusiveness of thought in vs. 7–10:

Name for the law	Its nature	Its effects
law	perfect	converting
testimony	sure	making wise
statutes	right	rejoicing
commandment	pure	enlightening
fear	clean	[enduring]
judgments	true	[righteous]

Note the different terms used to describe the varied aspects of divine revelation and compare Ps. 119. Verses 7–10 appear in essence throughout Ps. 119.

"Law" is from the Heb. *torah*, meaning "teaching," "instruction," "direction" (see on Deut. 31:9; see also on Prov. 3:1). As the sun illuminates and gives life to the material earth, so the law lights and energizes the spiritual world. See also on Ps. 1:2.

"The Lord" is a translation of the Heb. *Yahweh* (see Vol. I, pp. 171, 172). In contrast with the title *'El* used of the Deity in v. 1, the divine name *Yahweh* is used exclusively throughout the rest of the psalm (seven times).

Perfect. Compare Rom. 7:12.

Converting. From the Heb. *shub*, which also means "to restore" (translated "relieve," Lam. 1:11, 16, 19). The law refreshes and invigorates.

Testimony. Heb. *'eduth*, frequently used of the Decalogue (see Ex. 25:16, 21, 22). *'Eduth* comes from *'ud*, "to bear witness." The revelation of God is God's witness or testimony, because it is His own affirmation concerning His nature, attributes, and consequent commands.

Sure. Heb. *'amen*, from which word we get our "amen." *'Amen* means "to be faithful," "to be lasting," "to be firmly established."

Simple. Heb. *pethi*, "the young, inexperienced; and easy to seduce." The childlike spirit is the first essential to gaining wisdom (see Matt. 11:25).

In the modern synagogue service, the reader speaks Ps. 19:7, 8 as he unrolls the Torah during the Sabbath morning service.

8. Statutes. Heb. *piqqudim*, "orders," "precepts." The word occurs 24 times in the OT and is translated "precepts" in every instance except 3.

Rejoicing. God's commands are not stern; clear consciences beget joy.

Commandment. Heb. *miswah*, from *sawah*, "to appoint," "to give an order" (see Deut. 6:1; 7:11; Ps. 119:6, 10, 19, 21, 32, 35, 47, etc.).

Pure. Used of the heart (Ps. 24:4; Ps. 73:1), of man (Job 11:4), and of the sun (S. of Sol. 6:10). As the sun gives light to the world, so God's commandments light man's pathway in his search for truth.

9. Fear. Heb. *yir'ah*, "fear," "terror," as in Jonah 1:10; then "reverence," or "holy fear," as in Ps. 2:11; 5:7. In technical usage *yir'ah* becomes almost equivalent to "service," or "worship." Men may forsake the "fear of the Almighty" (Job 6:14). The "fear of the Lord" may be taught (Ps. 34:11). It is the "instruction of wisdom" (Prov. 15:33). The man who fears God will also respect and observe His precepts.

Clean. The worship of God is free from the defiling rites that characterized Canaanite religions.

Judgments. Rules of righteous administration. God has judged, determined His laws to be right (see Ex. 21:1; Ps. 9:7, 16; PP 364).

True. Literally, "truth."

10. Fine gold. Heb. *paz*, "pure gold." The idea expressed in the first use of the word "gold" is intensified. Gold is regarded as an article of great value among men, but spiritual riches gained through following God's precepts are far superior to material wealth.

The honeycomb. Better, "the honey of [the] combs." Honey is one of the sweetest of all natural substances and a delight to the taste. To the Hebrew it was a symbol of all that was pleasant to the palate. Even sweeter to the soul are God's commandments. "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 34:8). One could become sated with honey, but never with the joyful results of obedience to the will of God. To the psalmist God's law was not burdensome, it was not a yoke.

11. Thy servant. In vs. 11–14 David applies the truths of the earlier part of the psalm to his own character and conduct.

12. Understand. Or, "discern."

Errors. Heb. *shegi'oth*, a word occurring only here. The root is *shaga'*, which, like *shagah*, means "to err inadvertently." In view of the far-reaching demands of God's law, we are likely to make many mistakes of which we are unaware. These are the secret (literally, "hidden") faults of the second half of the parallelism (see Ps. 139:23, 24). They may be hidden both from the one who sins and from the world. The psalmist prays for deliverance from "secret faults" (Ps. 19:12), "presumptuous sins" (v. 13), and sins of word and thought (v. 14). It has been observed that when we recognize sin in *another,* often our own dormant or hidden sin is irritating *us.*

13. Presumptuous sins. These are the sins committed when we know that we are doing wrong. They are contrasted with "errors," "secret faults."

Dominion. Compare Ps. 119:133; John 8:32, 36; Rom. 6:14; Gal. 5:1.

The great transgression. The Hebrew does not have the article.

14. Be acceptable. The psalm closes with a prayer that at once asks acceptance of the words and the thoughts that the psalmist has uttered, and constitutes his general petition for purity of word and thought in the experiences of every day. In the general aspect, the prayer is universal and as such is a model for all men.

Strength. Literally, "rock." See on Ps. 18:1.

Redeemer. Heb. *go'el*, "deliver" (see on Ruth 2:20). God is my Redeemer, delivering me from the power and guilt of sin (see Ps. 78:35; Isa. 14; 41:14; 43; etc.).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 AA 572; CS 17; CT 54; Ed 21, 101; ML 294; MYP 366; PP 116; SC 90; 4T 581; 5T 312
1, 2 ML 214; PP 48; SL 52; TM 137
1–3COL 22; CT 453; ML 112, 175; 3T 333; 8T 257
2–4MH 412
3 SL 53
7 COL 286; DA 308, 505; GC 468; MB 80, 118; ML 160, 163, 250; PK 623; TM 120, 247; 4T 15; 5T 329; 6T 221, 365; 8T 207
7, 8 6T 259
8 AA 475; Ed 229; Pk 83; 4T 27
9 4T 336
9–11CT 31; FE 185
10, 11 Ed 252
11 4T 27; 6T 304; 9T 115
14 ML 83; PP 413

PSALM 20

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 20, 21 are companion psalms of liturgical type, the former doubtless to be sung on behalf of the king as he was about to go to war; the latter to be sung on his victorious return. Ps. 20 suggests antiphonal arrangement for the ritual of the service: vs. 1–5 to be sung by the congregation, vs. 6–8 by the king or perhaps a Levite, v. 9 by the people. The superscription of the Syriac version says that it was composed at the time of David's war with the Syrians and Ammonites (2 Sam. 10). On the authorship of the psalm see PP 716.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. The Lord hear thee. Verses 1–5 constitute the prayer of intercession for the king as he is about to go forth to battle. They were probably chanted while the smoke of the sacrifice ascended heavenward.

Trouble. Heb. *sarah*, "distress," "narrowness."

Name. God's actual name is represented by the Hebrew characters *YHWH,* transliterated with the vowel points *Yahweh* (see Ex. 6:3). The word is believed to be from the root *hayah*, which means "to be," or, "to become." On the basis of ancient Phoenician usage the form *Yahweh* has been understood to represent a verb form that may be translated "the Causer to be," or, "the Sustainer." The name *Yahweh* therefore designates God as the first cause of existence. The name stands for all that the Deity represents. See further on Ps. 7:17.

God of Jacob. Probably an indirect reference to the experience of Gen. 35:3.

2. Strengthen. Literally, "support," "uphold."

Zion. See Ps. 2:6.

3. Offerings. Heb. *minchoth*, in the Levitical law referring to grain offerings (see on Lev. 2:1). In a more general sense *minchah* means "present" and is used of Abel's offering (Gen. 4:3, 4), and of Jacob's gift of appeasement (Gen. 32:13).

Burnt sacrifice. Heb. *'olah*, an offering in which the victim was completely burned (see Vol. I, p. 698; see on Lev. 1:3).

Selah. See p. 629.

4. All thy counsel. The people pray that all the king's plans and the measures he takes in war may be successful.

5. Name. See on Ps. 7:17.

Set up our banners. In an acknowledgment of victory at the hands of God. This closes the general petition of the people.

6. Now know I. Verses 6–8 constitute the response of the king or perhaps of a Levite speaking alone. The change in pronoun from "thee" and "we" of vs. 1–5 to "I" is best explained in this way. What was hoped for in the petition of the congregation is now an established fact.

Anointed. See on Ps. 2:2.

Hear. Literally, "answer."

His holy heaven. Literally, "heaven of his holiness."

7. Chariots. War chariots, for transporting soldiers into battle and providing facilities for combat. Pharaoh trusted in chariots (Ex. 14:7). David's northern enemies, the Syrians, were especially formidable because of their use of chariots and horsemen (see 1 Chron. 18:4; 19:18); his own troops seem to have consisted entirely of infantry. Later, Solomon developed a large standing army of chariots and cavalry (see 1 Kings 10:26–29). It was never God's plan that His people should have to rely upon brute force for victory (see Deut. 17:16). This verse is a wonderful confession of faith in the right as against confidence in might.

8. They are brought down. The verbs in this verse may be regarded as being prophetic perfects, that is, in anticipation the king sees his enemies vanquished and

describes the event as having already taken place. This verse is an instance of antithetic parallelism.

9. Save, Lord. The LXX translates this verse, "O Lord, save thy king: and hear us in the day we call upon thee."

The translation of the KJV seems to correspond with the beginning of the psalm, and expresses complete confidence in the heavenly King. This verse was probably sung by the congregation in reply to the solo voice of vs. 6–8.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5 6T 395

7 PP 510, 716

PSALM 21

INTRODUCTION.—Like Ps. 20, its companion, Ps. 21, is a liturgical psalm intended for use in the public worship service. It is a psalm of thanksgiving on the success of the campaign for which the preceding psalm was the supplication. It has three parts: direct thanksgiving to God on behalf of the king (vs. 1–7), an address to the king (vs. 8–12), and a final ejaculation of praise (v. 13). The psalm presents a splendid picture of the king: dignified, glorious, invincible in God's might.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. The king. Verses 1–7 express the gratitude of the congregation for the victory God has given the king. It is always becoming to make public recognition of answered prayer. The king is probably David. Here the expression *ledawid*, "by David," or "for David" (see p. 616), should probably be translated "concerning David."

In thy strength. The chariots and horses were powerless against God's strength (see Ps. 20:7). The reversing of the order of ideas in the parallelism is a favorite rhetorical device: "joy … strength"; "salvation … rejoice." God's salvation had previously been anticipated (Ps. 20:5, 6, 9). Now it is realized. Ancient Jewish tradition regarded the psalm as Messianic, as is shown by the free translation of the Targum: "O Lord, in thy strength king Messiah shall rejoice."

2. Desire. The prayer for the king (Ps. 20:4) has been answered. The phrase "heart's desire" has become a part of the English vernacular. Answers to prayer may be expected when human desires correspond to God's desires and when the will is subject to Him (see DA 668).

Withholden. "Denied."

Selah. See p. 629.

3. Preventest. Literally, "confrontest." See on Ps. 18:5. God showed His favor to the king by coming to meet him with blessings (see Deut. 28:2).

Crown. To be understood metaphorically, as God's recognition of the king's right to rule (see 2 Sam. 7:12–16).

4. For ever and ever. Compare the formula used in praying for the king (see 1 Kings 1:31; Neh. 2:3). The clause points to the unlimited continuation of the king's dynasty.

6. Made him most blessed. Or, "set him to be blessings." Abraham was thus "set" to be a blessing (see Gen. 12:2). God intended that the king—and every son of God—should be not only the receiver but the dispenser of blessings (see also Isa. 19:24; Eze. 34:26).

Glad with thy countenance. See on Ps. 4:6; 16:11.

7. Shall not be moved. See on Ps. 15:5; cf. Ps. 16:8.

8. All thine enemies. In vs. 8–12 the congregation addresses the king. In vs. 1–7 "thou" refers to God; in these verses "thou" means the king. The psalmist looks forward to complete victory over all enemies, even as the present victory provides such a promise.

9. Fiery oven. Some Hebrew ovens were probably heated by burning wood inside of them; thus they would have the appearance of a furnace (see Mal. 4:1). The ultimate destruction of the wicked will be complete (see Rev. 20:14, 15).

Anger. From the Heb. *paneh*, literally, "face," but which may also mean "will," as the Ugaritic texts (see pp. 618, 619) have shown (see on Ps. 9:20). The passage may therefore be rendered, "Thou shalt make them as a fiery furnace at the time of thy will," that is, at a time God would see fit to do it.

10. Fruit. That is, their children (see Gen. 30:2; Lam. 2:20).

11. Not able. The best of men's plans fail if God is against them.

12. Against the face. This is a graphic picture of the enemies put to flight by pursuers who get ahead of them and aim their arrows at their faces.

13. Be thou exalted. Like Ps. 20, the psalm ends with a prayer. The psalmist has completed, on the lips of the congregation, his good wishes and prophecies for the king. Now he turns to Jehovah and prays Him to reveal Himself as the source of all His people's strength (as in v. 1). Here is a final picture of universal praise (see Rev. 7:10–12; 12:10; 19:1–3).

PSALM 22

INTRODUCTION.—This psalm has been called a prophetic and Messianic psalm of the greatest pathos, and has sometimes been termed The Psalm of the Cross, because of references in it that NT writers apply to the sufferings of the sinless Son of God during His passion, when, despite His trust in God, it appeared that God had forsaken Him. There is in the entire psalm no confession of sin or trace of bitterness. The imagery is that of David, and the psalm abounds in expressions which appear in psalms that are generally attributed to David. Though the psalmist appears to be relating his own experience, frequent references in the NT attest the Messianic character of at least portions of this psalm (Matt 27:35, 39, 43, 46; Mark 15:24, 34; Luke 23:34, 35; John 19:24, 28). On the principle of blended and dual application see on Deut. 18:15.

The psalm has two parts, the first 21 verses consisting of the complaint and prayer of the sufferer; the last ten verses (vs. 22–31), of thanksgiving after deliverance. There is no transition between the two parts: dramatic abruptness marks the change from despondency to praise. See DA 741–757 for valuable help in understanding the Messianic features of this psalm. One should not turn from Ps. 22 without reading the hymn "O sacred Head, now wounded, with grief and shame weighed down" (see *The Church Hymnal,* No. 130), in which the harmonies of J. S. Bach's noble chorale are set to the moving words of the hymn.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 628.

1. My God. Heb. *'Eli*. On the force of the word used here for "God" see Vol. I, p. 171. "My" seems to add a touch of loving faith to the apparent despair of the rest of the verse. Faith struggles with fear.

Why? The cry of a despairing child who cannot understand why his father has left him.

Forsaken me. Heb. *'azabtani*. The form *sabachthani* is the Greek transliteration of the Aramaic, in which Jesus uttered His cry (see Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34).

From helping me. Literally, "from my salvation."

Roaring. Heb. *she'agah*, used to describe the roar of a lion (Job 4:10; Isa. 5:29; Eze. 19:7; Zech. 11:3). As used of a human being, an intense cry (see Ps. 32:3). See further DA 753–756.

2. Am not silent. God heard every cry, but Christ had no evidence of answer (see DA 753).

3. But. The sufferer is perplexed by the trial through which he passes. How can his God, who is holy and full of compassion, treat him in this fashion?

Inhabitest the praises. Perhaps a figure of God dwelling in the sanctuary, surrounded by those who sing His praise.

4. Our fathers trusted. The sufferer seems to plead the argument that since God delivered the fathers who trusted Him, surely He will deliver him. When we are in darkness, seeing others rescued may make our lot appear more bitter.

5. Not confounded. Rather, "not ashamed." When men trust and find their trust betrayed, they feel ashamed, as if they had been foolish to trust (see Jer. 14:3). But God had always proved reliable.

6. A worm. He felt disregarded by God, as if he were only a groveling worm beneath the notice of God. Compare Isa. 41:14; 49:7; 52:14; 53:3. For the distinction between "man" (Heb. *'ish*) and "men" (*'adam*) see on Ps. 4:2; 8:4.

7. Laugh me to scorn. From the Heb. *la'ag*, "mock," "deride," as in Ps. 2:4 (see Mark 15:29).

Shoot out the lip. That is, draw the mouth despisingly (see Ps. 35:21).

Shake the head. As in contempt (see Ps. 44:14). What they say follows in Ps. 22:8.

8. Trusted. Literally, "rolled"; that is, committed, entrusted himself (see Ps. 37:5; Prov. 16:3). This taunt was actually quoted by the scribes and elders who watched the crucifixion, and applied to Christ's humiliation on the cross (see Matt. 27:43).

9. Out of the womb. As long as he can remember. The mockery of enemies is turned into an argument for deliverance. From considering the derision of his enemies, he now turns to the violence of their activities against him.

Didst make me hope. His sense of hope was instilled in him from infancy.

12. Bulls. A figure for fierce men, intent on his destruction.

Strong bulls. Heb. *'abbirim*, which in several Ugaritic texts (see pp. 618, 619) means "buffalo." Once it designates a mythological figure born to the god Baal by his sister Anath.

Bashan. A region east of the Jordan, famous for its rich pasturelands and large and strong cattle (see Deut. 32:14; Eze. 39:18; Amos 4:1).

13. Gaped upon me with their mouths. Or, "opened their mouths against me." The picture is that of a wild beast about to spring upon, and tear to pieces, its prey.

A roaring lion. As if the greediness of the bulls were not enough, the psalmist now heightens the concept by introducing the figure of the lion thirsting for its prey and making a mighty tumult.

14. Poured out like water. Compare Joshua 7:5. The figure seems to indicate the loss of strength (2 Sam. 14:14).

Melted. His heart was no longer firm. His vitality was exhausted (see Lam. 2:11).

15. Potsherd. A fragment of broken earthenware. His strength was not lively like a growing tree, but dry and fragile like a brittle piece of earthenware.

My tongue cleaveth. Probably in intense thirst.

The dust of death. A figurative way of describing death. Death is associated with the dust of the grave.

16. Dogs. Men resembling ferocious, snarling dogs have surrounded him, as it were, in a pack, intent upon his life. Oriental cities were noted for packs of hungry dogs, which often feasted on unburied bodies of the dead (see 1 Kings 14:11; cf. Ps. 59:6, 14, 15). The psalmist further heightens the ferocity of the circumstances by adding dogs to the lion and the bulls of Bashan (see on vs. 12, 13).

They pierced. Heb. *ke'ari*, which may be translated "as a lion," as in Isa. 38:13, the only other occurrence of the form in the OT. The thought of the sentence then becomes, "Like a lion they surround my hands and my feet." *Ke'ari* cannot correctly be translated "they pierced." It is possible that the word is misspelled, and that the translators of the ancient versions, the LXX, the Syriac, and the Vulgate, preserved the true reading in their rendering "they pierced." By these words the Saviour foretold the treatment He was to receive (see DA 746). Compare John 20:25–27.

17. Tell. Literally, "count." He could count them because of their exposure due to emaciation. For a similar use of the verb "tell," see Ps. 147:4.

18. Part. "Divide," "apportion."

Cast lots. See the fulfillment of this prediction in Matt. 27:35; Luke 23:34; John 19:23, 24.

19. Thou. Placed first in the Hebrew for emphasis. The "thou" is in contrast with the persecutors. The prayer of v. 11 is repeated with deeper urgency than the first time it was offered.

20. Soul. See on Ps. 3:2; 16:10.

Darling. Heb. *yechidah*, "one alone," like an only daughter (Judges 11:34). The form is feminine because *yechidah* is parallel to "soul," which in the Hebrew is feminine. The LXX translates *yechidah* by *monogenes*, which is the adjective translated "only begotten" in John 3:16.

Dog. Compare v. 16.

21. Lion's mouth. Compare v. 13.

Thou hast heard me. The psalmist's pleading ends with a feeling of complete relief. He knows that the Lord is near to help. This rapid change of feeling in the midst of the verse is typical of a large group of psalms (see Ps. 3; 6; 12; 28; etc.). Perhaps this psalm exhibits the most striking instance in the Psalter of this unique feature of the Hebrew dramatic monologue.

Unicorns. Heb. *remim*, "wild oxen" (see on Job 39:9). This verse gave the lion and the unicorn to the British coat of arms. See on Num. 22:22.

Although surrounded by "dogs," "lions," "bulls," "wild oxen," the sufferer knows that he is not forsaken. Despondency and gloom give way to trust, peace, and joyous

praise. Verses 22–31 are a triumphant song of praise. In Felix Mendelssohn's choral setting of Ps. 22, there is, at this point in the composition, a sudden dramatic change from minor to major key, portraying the complete change in feelings.

22. Congregation. He will offer His testimony of praise among the assembled worshipers (see Ps. 1:5; Isa. 38:19, 20).

23. Praise him. All Israel, all God's people, are called on to join in the ascription of praise.

25. Of thee. Literally, "from with Thee." God has given the will and power to praise as well as the deliverance, which is the reason for praise.

Congregation. Compare v. 22.

Vows. The sacrifices promised as an expression of gratitude for deliverance.

26. Eat. A part of the sacrifices of vows was eaten by the offerer (see Lev. 7:16). In Israel, feasting, as an expression of gratitude, was a part of worship. The meek will share in this meal, and by eating together, will be drawn into unity.

Your. The sudden change from "the meek," "they" (third person), to "your" (second person) is typically Hebraic, and emphasizes the directness of the address.

27. Ends of the world. The outlook is extended from those that "fear the Lord" and "the seed of Jacob" and "the seed of Israel" (v. 23) to include all nations (see God's promise to Abraham, Gen. 12:3).

28. Kingdom. Rather, "position of king," "kingship." Compare Zech. 14:9; Rev. 11:15.

29. All they. This verse should be connected with the foregoing. Jehovah is king over the nations, and the rich and prosperous among them are presented as coming to the sanctuary to sacrifice and to worship. Likewise the weaker, decaying nations, represented as "they that go down to the dust," come to bow down.

None can keep alive his own soul. Rather, "he who does not keep his soul alive." This may be understood as further amplifying the thought of the weaker nations. The LXX translates this sentence "and my soul lives to him," suggesting a different interpretation, but the Hebrew appears simpler.

30. Seed. Heb. *zera'*, "descendants." As the result of the promulgation of the gospel many would turn to serve God.

It shall be accounted. Or, "it shall be recounted." One generation will pass on to the next generation the good news of salvation (see 2 Tim. 2:2).

Lord. Heb. *'Adonai* (see Vol. I, p. 173).

31. Declare his righteousness. Compare Rom. 3:21–26.

That he hath done this. That God has accomplished all that is stated in the psalm.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

6–8AA 225
16–18DA 746; PK 691
16, 18 SR 224
17, 18 AA 225
22–269T 279
27 PK 370
30 DA 828

5

PSALM 23

INTRODUCTION.—Probably the best known and best loved of all the psalms is Ps. 23, universally known as The Shepherd Psalm. It is at once the delight of childhood and the consolation of old age. It has been variously called The Pearl of Psalms, The Nightingale Psalm, The Shepherd's Song About His Shepherd, etc. Augustine noted that this psalm was the hymn of the martyrs. Undoubtedly more books and articles have been written on this psalm and more poems and hymns composed on its theme than on any other of the psalms. It has a message for men of every age.

But it is more than The Shepherd Psalm. It paints not only the picture of the tender Shepherd, leading His flock to rest and feed "in green pastures" "beside the still waters" and protecting them from the perils of the wilderness, but also the picture of the gracious Host, providing superabundance of food and solicitous care for His guest. The psalm closes with a profession of absolute confidence in Jehovah to lead His child lovingly through this life and to entertain him as His guest to the end of his days.

The poem falls into three stanzas. The first two (vs. 1–3 and v. 4) present the ideas of loving guidance and protection; the third (vs. 5, 6) presents the idea of hospitality provided by a host.

Ps. 23 has no touch of nationalism. It is universal in its appeal. The experiences of David as a shepherd in the ruggedness of the Judean hills, and later as a royal host in the opulence of the Oriental court in the capital city, surely fitted him for writing this sweetest of sacred lyrics.

On the superscription see Ed 164; DA 476, 477; PP 413.

1. My shepherd. The figure representing Jehovah as a shepherd and His people as sheep, is common in the Scriptures. The earliest occurrence of the image is Gen. 48:15, where "the God which fed me" is, literally, "the shepherd of me" (see Gen. 49:24). Elsewhere the figure is found in Psalms (78:52; 80:1; 119:176), in the prophets (Isa. 40:11; Eze. 34; Micah 7:14), and in the NT (Luke 15:3–7; John 10:1–18; 21:15–17; Heb. 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25; 1 Peter 5:4). To understand and to appreciate the beauty and meaning of the imagery, one must know the hazardous nature of the Judean wilderness, and the intimate life of the shepherd and his sheep, especially the devotion that springs up between them during the many hours of solitude that they spend together.

I shall not want. A statement of absolute trust in God. This clause is the keynote of the psalm.

2. Green pastures. Literally, "pastures of fresh, new grass."

Still waters. Literally, "waters of resting places," that is, resting places with water, as by a river, brook, well, or lake. What a picture of the grace of God is given here (see PP 413)! The Good Shepherd leads His sheep "beside the still waters" only the better to prepare them for the strenuous activities of the open road. God grants hours of refreshment to enable men the better to meet the hard battles of the daily round of affairs.

3. Restoreth. Heb. *shub* (see on Ps. 19:7).

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[5]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 11:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Soul. Heb. *nephesh* (see on Ps. 3:2; 16:10).

Paths of righteousness. Those familiar with the rough terrain of Judea know how easy it is to waste time and suffer serious mishap when traversing the highlands, cut with deep wadis, if they do not find the right path. If we permit, God always leads us in the right way, although at the time that way may not seem easy.

For his name's sake. God's guidance is a revelation to men of His character (see Ex. 33:19; see on Ps. 31:3).

4. The shadow of death. Heb. *ṣalmaweth*, by popular etymology from *ṣel*, "shadow," and *maweth*, "death." Both words are very common in the OT, *ṣel* being found 49 times, 45 times translated "shadow," and *maweth* occurring 157 times, 128 times translated "death." Some modern scholars derive *ṣalmaweth* from an Akkadian root *ṣalamu*, meaning "to grow black," and hence translate *ṣalmaweth* "darkness." The traditional derivation has the support of the LXX. The Ugaritic (see pp. 618, 619) sheds no light on *ṣalmaweth*. In the extant literature of that language the word occurs only once in an obscure passage. Bunyan has made the phrase "the shadow of death" especially precious to readers of his great allegory, *Pilgrim's Progress.*

Thou art with me. This is enough. The Christian needs nothing more than the consciousness of God's presence. "Only Thee, only Thee, none on earth but Thee."

Rod. Heb. *shebeṭ*, used of a shepherd's rod or staff (Lev. 27:32); of a teacher's staff (2 Sam. 7:14; Prov. 13:24); and of a ruler's scepter (Gen. 49:10; Isa. 14:5). It was sometimes used as a weapon (2 Sam. 23:21), and such a function is probably the thought in Ps. 23:4, the rod being used as a weapon to ward off ravenous beasts that infested the pasturelands.

Staff. Heb. *mish'eneth*, "a staff," "a support," for example for the sick and aged to lean upon (Ex. 21:19; Zech. 8:4).

They comfort. "They" is emphatic, as if to say, "It is *they* that comfort me." The rod and staff are tokens of the Shepherd's presence, and show the Shepherd to be ready to succor at any instant.

The Shepherd provides rest, refreshment, nourishment, restoration, fellowship, guidance, deliverance from fear, comfort, security, victory over enemies. What more can the Christian ask? Nevertheless, the psalmist proceeds to emphasize these evidences of Jehovah's goodness and adds to them by employing a different figure, that of the gracious Host.

5. Preparest a table. David now represents himself as a guest in God's banquet hall. Jehovah is even more than a shepherd—He is a king, lavishing upon His guests the bounties of His table. Compare the parable of the marriage of the king's son (Matt. 22:1–14). The phrase "preparest a table" is idiomatic for preparing a meal (see Prov. 9:2).

Of mine enemies. Since God is the host, the plots of the enemies to injure must come to nought.

My cup runneth over. Compare Eph. 3:20. David is here thinking primarily, if not altogether, of the cup of joy of the Lord. God gives unstintingly of His mercies, pressed down and running over. In a secondary sense the figure may describe the blessings of material prosperity. David had enjoyed such blessings. He also learned through hard

experience that prosperity is dangerous to spiritual life. “The cup most difficult to carry is … the cup that is full to the brim” (MH 212). Even harder, if possible, is it to carry the cup that “runneth over.”

6. Mercy. Material and spiritual blessings are personified as following David all through life. His language shows complete trust in God’s guidance through life’s present vicissitudes, and gladly anticipates that guidance in the future.

House of the Lord. The psalmist’s continuance as a guest in God’s house is assured (see Ps. 15:1; cf. Ps. 27:4; 65:4; Ps. 84:4).

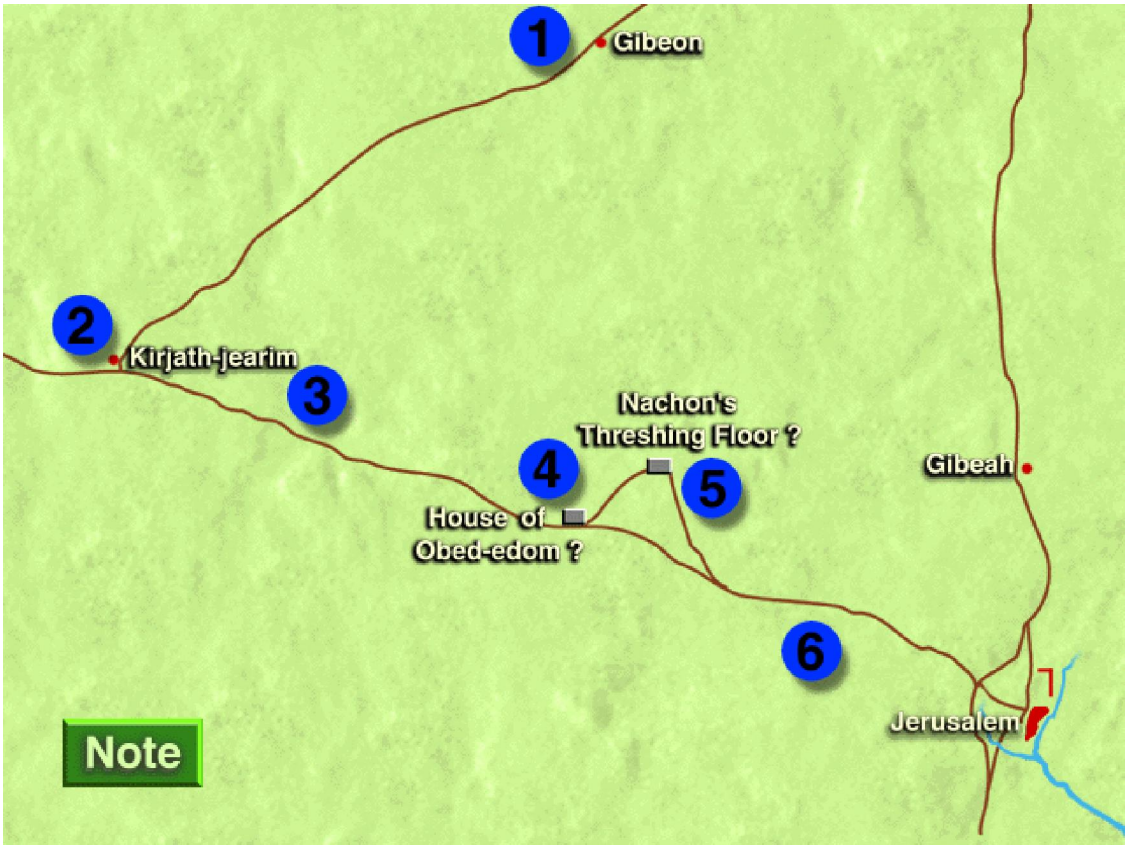
For ever. Literally, “to length of days,” implying as long as he lives. But the believing child of God looks beyond his fellowship with God in this life to eternal communion in the world to come. The psalm closes in a mood of unending gladness.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 DA 476; LS 39; 1T 31; 8T 10, 39
1–4Ed 164
2 PP 413
2, 3 ML 206
4 MH 268; 7T 87
5 LS 171
6 CS 18; 4T 328; 6T 367

Sacredness of God’s Calling
[6]

[6]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 23:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



God accepts men as He finds them and them endeavors constantly to lead them to new concepts of His majesty and power. No wrath fell upon the Philistines for transporting the ark contrary to divine specifications, but when Israel followed the Philistine method, God permitted defeat. When the Israelites obeyed the divine instructions, they prospered. The psalmist enunciates the prime requisites of character toward which God is seeking to lead all those who desire to be citizens of His kingdoms of grace and of glory.[7]

PSALM 24

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 24, one of the anthems for the establishment of Jerusalem as the city of the great King (see Ps. 30; 101; 132:1–9), seems to have a historical background in the events of 2 Sam. 6 and 1 Chron. 15. David had captured the Jebusite stronghold of Zion (2 Sam. 5:6–10) and now determined to bring the ark from its temporary resting place in the house of Obed-edom at Kirjath-jearim to the tent that he had prepared for it in the city of Jerusalem. Accordingly, he arranged a ceremony for the occasion in which Ps. 24 was sung as part of the high ritual (see PP 707, 708). Some have thought that David composed the psalm especially for this occasion. However, this is not stated. The words of vs. 7–10 of the psalm were sung by two choirs of angels when heaven welcomed the true Son of David back to the heavenly Jerusalem (see DA 833; EW 187, 190, 191).

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[7]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

The anthem has two parts. In its original use, the first part was doubtless sung at the foot of the hill on which Jerusalem stood, before the procession began to ascend the heights (vs. 1–6); and the second part was sung in front of the gates of the city immediately preceding the grand entry (vs. 7–10). The two stanzas of the first part may have been sung by alternating choirs; the summonses, challenges, and responses of the second part, by two choirs in antiphonal fashion. Verses 7–10 appear in the inspiring chorus, "Lift Up Your Heads, O Ye Gates," in Handel's oratorio *The Messiah,* Part the Second, which interprets the antiphonal nature of the psalm with great satisfaction.

This intricately wrought poem has been called an OT expansion of the thought underlying Jesus' statement, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). The foundation requirement of citizenship in God's kingdom is purity. Only the pure in heart shall enter the Jerusalem that is above. Righteousness gives entrance into the gates of heaven (see Ps. 118:19, 20).

According to tradition, Ps. 24 was sung as part of the morning worship in the Temple on the first day of the week. This is suggested by the LXX, which has for the heading to the psalm, "A psalm of David, of the first day of the week." The words of this psalm are also used in the Sabbath morning and afternoon services of the modern synagogue before the Torah is returned to the ark. On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. The earth is the Lord's. God has a right to the earth, to all that it contains, and to all its inhabitants, since He is Creator and Lord of the whole earth. This concept annihilates exclusiveness of Jew or Gentile. The verse is a perfect example of synonymous parallelism, the second half balancing, repeating, and enlarging the thought of the first half.

2. Upon the seas. A figure probably drawn from the record of creation. The earth was originally completely covered with water (Gen. 1:2). Then the voice of the Creator bade the waters to be gathered into one place, and the dry land to appear (Gen. 1:9). Compare the expression "water under the earth" (Ex. 20:4).

3. Who shall ascend? Compare Ps. 15.

4. Clean hands. Untainted by iniquity. Since the hands are the instruments of activity, to have clean hands means to be upright (see Job 17:9; Ps. 18:24).

A pure heart. True religion does not consist in mere outward conformity to religious ceremonies; it controls the heart and produces purity of thought and sincerity of motive.

Lifted up his soul. "Soul" means "self" (see on Ps. 3:2; Ps. 16:10).

Vanity. Heb. *shaw'*, "worthlessness"; sometimes used of idols as being worthless (Jer. 18:15); also of false opinions, swearing falsely or taking God's name in vain (Ex. 20:7). The godly man regards only that which is true and real.

Nor sworn deceitfully. Compare the ninth commandment (Ex. 20:16).

5. Blessing from the Lord. God's friendship and favor are the right of him who has the character referred to.

Righteousness. He receives God's approval as a righteous man, being treated according to his real character.

6. Generation. The Hebrew word means "people," "race," or "type of man" (see Ps. 14:5). The expression "to seek God" is used to describe real heart religion (see Ps. 9:10; Ps. 14:2; Ps. 63:1). It includes earnest desire to know God.

O Jacob. The LXX renders this clause, "that seek the face of the God of Jacob."

7. Lift up your heads. The procession approaches the gates of Zion, about to enter the city, and utters a summons to admit the King of glory. See on Mark 16:19.

Everlasting doors. Suggesting permanence. Jerusalem is to be the permanent abiding place of the ark.

8. Who is this King of glory? This question was sung as a response to those who had demanded of the watchers upon the walls that the city gates should be opened (see PP 707). The answer follows. The King of glory is Jehovah, strong and mighty, a God of power, Creator and Proprietor of the earth, who shows His power in overthrowing His enemies.

9. Lift up your heads. The repetition of summons gives force to what is uttered, and heightens the formal ritualism of the poem. A ceremony is in progress. Hebrew poetry delights in repetition or near repetition for the sake of emphasis (see v. 7).

10. Who is this King? See on v. 8.

The Lord of hosts. God rules over a universe of creatures and created things, marshaled in order, or arranged as armies for battle. His reign is universal. The inhabitants of the universe, of all ranks and orders, acknowledge His rule. "Hosts" is used at times of the heavenly bodies (see Gen. 2:1; Deut. 17:3), at times of the angels (Joshua 5:14; Ps. 103:21; Ps. 148:2). At the first response of the bearers of the ark (Ps. 24:8), the gates appear to have remained closed before the waiting procession. At this second response, "The Lord of hosts," instead of "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle," appears to be a sort of glorious password that unlocks the city. The ritualistic effect is heightened. See also 1 Sam. 17:45; 2 Sam. 6:2; Isa. 1:9.

The psalm closes in perfect accord with the opening thought: God alone is ruler of the universe; He alone should be universally recognized. The ceremony of installing the ark in the hill of the Lord provides a fitting occasion for this proclamation.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 ChS 168; CS 72, 186; TM 198; 1T 536; 2T 652; 3T 549; 5T 311; 7T 212; WM 278
3 PP 506
3, 4 CH 82, 101; LS 66; ML 72, 129; 2T 307, 459
4 EW 16, 58; ML 341; TM 426, 443; 1T 60; 2T 552; 3T 207; 7T 212
7 EW 187, 190
7–9PP 476; SR 236
7–10AA 38; DA 833; PP 707; SR 239
8 EW 190
9, 10 EW 191

PSALM 25

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 25 is the second of the acrostic, or alphabetical, psalms (see p. 625). It is a prayer embodying such moods of devotion as supplication, confession of faith, and penitence. In common with other acrostic psalms, it shows no logical development of thought, but rather consists of a collection of independent expressions of devotion, arranged in alphabetical form, chiefly on the theme that God guides and teaches those who are of a humble and teachable spirit.

There are as many verses in the psalm as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet (22), the first letter standing at the beginning of each verse. However, the following deviations from the strict pattern are apparent: The first two verses begin with the first letter of the alphabet; the 2d, 6th, and 19th letters do not appear; vs. 18 and 19 both begin with the

20th letter; and v. 22 begins with the 17th letter. Ps. 34 is arranged in a somewhat similar manner.

On the authorship of the psalm see 5T 630.

On the superscription see p. 616.

1. Unto thee. The mood of meditation is set in the first verse (see Ps. 86:4; 143:8). In Hebrew the verse begins with *'aleph*, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

2. Not be ashamed. The psalmist trusted in God. His enemies would have reason to triumph if he were disappointed in his trust. The verse begins with *'aleph*. The second letter, *beth*, does not appear in the acrostic. However, the second word of this verse begins with *beth*. Some scholars consider the first word to belong to an unfinished line in v. 1.

3. Wait on thee. Compare Ps. 27:14; 37:34. The clause implies that we look to God for directions and for grace to follow them. The psalmist extends his prayer to include all pious believers.

4. Shew. Old English for "show". Wanting in spiritual understanding, we need to have the light of God shed on our pathway. Moses prayed for such light (see Ex. 33:13). The psalmist is constantly aware of this need (see Ps. 27:11; Ps. 86:11; Ps. 119:33). "Lead, Kindly Light" (Newman) is a beautiful prayer-hymn expressing this idea. When we pray to understand God's ways, we ask for understanding of His purposes so that we may intelligently regulate our conduct.

5. Thy truth. God's truth as distinguished from what we, as men, may erringly consider to be truth (see Ps. 36:1–3; Ps. 86:11).

Do I wait. See on v. 3.

6. Remember. Past blessings constitute the ground for David's expectation of future blessings. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). One of David's sweetest characteristics is his continual recollection of God's favors.

Ever of old. God's acts of kindness had never failed. God is always good. The letter *waw* does not appear in the acrostic; this verse begins with the letter following *waw* in the alphabet, namely *zayin*.

7. Sins of my youth. Perhaps conscious of the earthly father's tendency to forgive the follies of his son's youth, the psalmist petitions his heavenly Father to forget his youthful indiscretions (see Job 13:26, where Job accuses God of making him suffer for the sins of his youth). The prayer for forgiveness in this verse follows the psalmist's realization that sin would shut out God's mercy for which he had prayed in v. 6.

Transgressions. Heb. *pesha'im*, "rebellions," "revolts," thus implying willful sins.

For thy goodness' sake. Not for any goodness of his own, but because God is good. The psalm proceeds to extol the boundless goodness of God.

When in mature life we realize the weight of our sins, then we rest back upon the extent of God's love as expressed in these words: "tender mercies," "lovingkindnesses," "mercy," "goodness" (vs. 6, 7). The verse suggests that the psalmist wrote this poem in his later years.

8. Good and upright. From prayer the psalmist turns to reflection on God's character and ways with men. Since He is good and just, God will rebuke, chasten, guide aright, as a good teacher.

9. Meek. Those who are teachable, willing to learn. Humility is the first rung of the ladder of Christian growth (see Matt. 18:3).

In judgment. In right evaluation of truth, of duty, and of the right way to live.

His way. "Not my way, but Thine, O Lord!" must be the prayer of the humble follower of God.

10. Mercy and truth. Synonymous with compassion and faithfulness, two attributes of God's character (see Ps. 85:10; cf. the "grace and truth" of John 1:17).

Testimonies. See on Ps. 19:7.

11. For thy name's sake. For the honor of God's name. The psalmist turns from reflecting on God's goodness, to recollection of his sins. He is forced to cry out for pardon, that grace and truth may be shown in his own soul (see v. 10). He fears that he may have broken the covenant.

It is great. The psalmist feels that his sin is so great (see Rom. 5:15–21) that he needs the pardon that only a good God can give. Infinite love provided a way so that sins can be freely forgiven.

12. Teach in the way. God is able to do great things for the man who reveres Him. Such a man will learn from God the right path. To him God will reveal the way of His commandments (see Ps. 119:30, 173; John 7:17).

That he shall choose. God will so teach him that he will choose the right way. Man is not an automaton. He has the power of choice. But when a man fears God, his power of choice is exercised in the right direction: he chooses God's way (see DA 668). Beginning with this verse another series of reflections is given.

13. Shall dwell. Literally, "pass the night."

At ease. Literally, "in goodness"; in a safe condition, contrasted with the plight of one who wanders about without a guide. The converted man is like a man who is comfortable and peaceful in his own home (see Ps. 34:11; 37:25).

His seed. His descendants.

Shall inherit. See Ex. 20:12; Lev. 26:3–13. The eternal purpose that the righteous shall inherit the earth is held in check only by accidental and temporary circumstances (see Rom. 8:19–24; Matt. 5:5).

14. Secret. Heb. *sod*, "confidential talk," "an intimate special friend," "a group of intimates." "Friendship" may express the intent here (see RSV). The righteous enjoy intimate friendship with God. He tells His secrets to them (see on Prov. 3:32). Abraham was the friend of God (see 2 Chron. 20:7; cf. Gen. 18:17).

Covenant. See v. 10. God causes His children to understand whatever there is in His compact with them to promote their happiness and salvation.

15. Toward the Lord. Compare Ps. 141:8. It is well that spiritual farsightedness becomes a habitual state of mind. Are my eyes ever toward the Lord, or toward myself?

Out of the net. See Ps. 9:15; 10:19; 31:4. God does not keep us out of the snare, if we willfully seek to become entangled, but He promises to deliver and save us.

18. Forgive. Heb. *naśa'*, which has as one of its basic meanings "to lift up," also "to remove," and "to carry away." It is used of forgiveness in a number of passages (Gen. 50:17; Ex. 10:17; 32:32; etc.). *Naśa'* is also used of vicarious bearing of sin. The priests were to bear the iniquity of the children of Israel (Lev. 10:17). There is a simple transition from the idea of vicarious sin bearing to the idea of forgiveness. One of the

corresponding Greek words, *airo*, appears in John 1:29 in the statement, "which taketh away the sin of the world."

Instead of a *qoph*, which should begin this verse if the regular acrostic pattern were followed, this verse begins with a *resh*, the letter immediately following in the Hebrew alphabet. At the same time *resh* appears in its proper place at the beginning of v. 19.

19. Enemies. See Ps. 3:6, 7; 5:8; 6:7, 10; 7:1, 6; 17:9; etc.

Cruel hatred. David's enemies were continually seeking his destruction.

20. My soul. That is, "me" (see on Ps. 3:2; 16:10).

Not be ashamed. See on v. 2.

21. Integrity and uprightness. By the grace of God he hopes to attain the characteristics of perfection. Earlier he had deplored the greatness of his sin. (v. 11).

This verse begins with *taw*, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

22. Israel. The people of God. Whereas the psalm has been intensely personal, the psalmist now broadens his petition to include all God's children who find themselves in similar circumstances. It was natural for the psalmist to add a prayer for his people to the outpouring of his own heart. From the point of view of public worship, this verse makes the entire psalm appropriate to a congregation of worshipers.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

7–9 5T 630

9 AA 279; LS 92; ML 56; PP 384; SL 12; TM 502; 3T 449; 7T 213; 4T 653

10 GC 354

14 DA 412; FE 374; GC 312; PP 139, 329; TM 269

PSALM 26

INTRODUCTION.—In Ps. 26 the writer appeals to the Searcher of hearts to witness his integrity and to keep him from the fate of the wicked, and closes his prayer with a declaration of his purpose to be found among the friends of God. The psalm is a fitting prayer in preparation for public worship. It begins in a minor key and closes in a major strain of devoted praise to God for divine guidance.

On the superscription see p. 616.

1. Judge me. The psalmist asks God to examine and vindicate his case.

Integrity. Avowal of innocence under false accusation does not exclude a due sense of sin. The psalmist recognizes his need of divine redemption and mercy (v. 11).

Shall not slide. If I have the integrity that I maintain, I cannot slip, I shall not be moved (see on Ps. 15:5; 16:8).

2. Examine me. The psalmist asks God to scrutinize his conduct. The idea is repeated and emphasized in the verbs "prove" and "try."

Prove. Heb. *nasah*, "to test," "to try." *Nasah* is translated "tempt" in Gen. 22:1. Anciently "tempt" meant "to put to trial," "to test."

Reins. Literally, "kidneys." The word was anciently used to designate the seat of the emotions (see on Ps. 7:9).

3. Before mine eyes. Because the psalmist keeps God's mercy before him as a lodestar, he is kept from evil and walks in the path of truth (see on Ps. 1:1).

I have walked. This verse states the reason for the prayer of vs. 1, 2.

4. Have not sat. See on Ps. 1:1.

Vain persons. Literally, "men of vanity," men who pursue worthless aims instead of true ideals (see Job 11:11; see on Ps. 24:4).

Will I go in. See on Ps. 1:1. The change of tense to future suggests that he will continue to keep himself pure. The same significant change of tense appears also in v. 5.

5. Congregation of evil doers. The change of tense in this verse is analogous in significance to the change of tense in v. 4. These verses are strongly suggestive of the thought of Ps. 1:1.

6. Wash mine hands. The washing of hands was at times performed as a symbol of purity (see Deut. 21:6; Matt. 27:24). The psalmist pledges to preserve his soul in innocence so that he may approach God's altar.

"Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isa. 52:11).

Compass. The psalmist wishes to be pure so that he may join with the worshipers in the Temple.

7. That I may publish. Literally, "to cause to be heard." The truly sincere child of God is eager to tell others of God's goodness (see Ps. 9:1). A heart vocal with praise is one of the surest evidences of conversion.

8. I have loved. It is good to shun evil, but if religious activity ends there, the experience is negative; it is better to go to the place where God is—that is positive (see on Ps. 27:4).

Honour. Heb. *kabod*, either "honor" or "glory." In the sanctuary, where the distractions of the world are shut out, men may become conscious of God's glory.

9. Gather. The psalmist does not wish to be numbered with sinners and swept away with them to ultimate destruction.

My soul. That is, "me" (see on Ps. 3:2; 16:10).

Bloody men. Literally, "men of blood," that is, murderers.

11. I will walk. The psalmist is determined to continue to walk in the path he had hitherto trodden. This resolution is the ground for the prayer in the second part of the verse.

Integrity. Heb. *tom*, "completeness" (see Prov. 2:7; 10:9; 28:6 for other occurrences of *tom*).

Redeem me. The very fact that the psalmist prays for deliverance from sin, shows that he does not claim to be perfect in the absolute sense.

Be merciful. By hearing my prayer (see Ps. 4:1).

12. My foot standeth. The psalmist claims the answer to his prayer: with the eye of faith he sees himself already standing literally "in a level place" (see Ps. 40:2; cf. Isa. 40:4). After traversing paths rough and dangerous, uphill and down, over stones and boulders, through brambles and brush, he breathes a great sigh of relief to find footing "in an even place." This is the precious privilege of every child of God.

Will I bless. Thus fulfilling the resolution of v. 7 (see Ps. 22:22).

The psalm should lead us to examine the evidences of our loyalty to God, and when we have found a level place of Christian experience, to thank God for the evidences of our salvation. We need to cultivate the habit of thinking good thoughts, of avoiding evil company, of delighting in attendance at public worship; then we shall be able to bless Jehovah in the congregation of the righteous.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4 FE 294
7 CS 115

PSALM 27

INTRODUCTION.—This psalm was written by David when he was "a hunted fugitive, finding refuge in the rocks and caves of the wilderness" (Ed 164). It reveals the psalmist's spirit of absolute confidence in God amid the perils of flight. It has been called The Tonic Psalm. In no other psalm is David's yearning after the service of the sanctuary as intensely expressed as here. Some suggest 1 Sam. 22:22 as a background to the psalm. The psalm has three divisions: vs. 1–6 express the poet's assured confidence in God, despite the threatenings of the enemy; vs. 7–12 cry out plaintively for help; and vs. 13, 14, as a conclusion, find sure relief in hopeful trust in God. In the modern Jewish ritual, Ps. 27 is recited daily throughout the sixth month in preparation for the New Year and the Day of Atonement.

On the superscription see p. 616.

1. The Lord is my light. That is, Jehovah is the light illuminating the darkness about me, making clear my pathway. This expression, found frequently in the NT (see John 1:7–9; 12:46; 1 John 1:5), is not so common in the OT. Compare the Aaronic blessing (Num. 6:25).

Salvation. See Ps. 18:2; 62:2, 6.

Whom shall I fear? Neither other gods, for they are false, nor devils, nor men (see Rom. 8:31).

Strength. Literally, "a place of safety," "a stronghold" (see Ps. 28:8). Calvin named David's triple shield of defense against all threats, "Light, Salvation, Stronghold." The psalm begins on a note of absolute fearlessness. The psalmist's confidence in God brooks no fear.

2. Eat up my flesh. The psalmist often likens his enemies to ravening beasts (see Ps. 22:13, 16, 21).

Stumbled and fell. They failed in their purposes. The language of this verse seems to refer to some specific incident in which David was saved from the onslaught of his enemies.

3. In this. David's confidence mounts to a fresh height of fervent expression (see on Ps. 3:6).

4. One thing. David's longing to be engaged perpetually in the service of God, to be a perpetual guest of the heavenly Host, is beautifully expressed in this psalm (see Ps. 15, 23, 65).

Beauty. Heb. *no'am*, "graciousness," "kindness."

Enquire in his temple. At the Christian sanctuary our minds are enlightened, our doubts removed, and our hearts comforted by God's truth.

5. Pavilion. Heb. *sok*, "a covert," used of the covert of a lion in Ps. 10:9; Jer. 25:38; hence a hiding place. *Sok* is translated "tabernacle" in Ps. 76:2, which is described as being in Salem. The language of Ps. 27:5 is figurative of a place of protection. The literal house of God in Jerusalem cannot here be meant, because that did not come into existence until many years later.

In the secret. Literally, "in the hiding place." The most retired part of the dwelling. In the Hebrew the word for "secret" is the noun form of the verb translated "shall he hide."

6. Be lifted up. Symbolic of victory over his enemies.

Joy. Heb. *teru'ah*, literally, "a shout of joy." The word is used of the shout that accompanied the fall of the walls of Jericho (Joshua 6:5, 20). For other instances of *teru'ah*, see Num. 23:21; 1 Sam. 4:5; 2 Sam 6:15; Ps. 33:3; 150:5.

Sing praises. This measure of praise comes from a full heart, so full that the psalmist chooses to give expression to his determination by repeating and dwelling on the idea.

7. Hear, O Lord. At this point in the psalm there is a complete change in tone from implicit trust to a plaintive cry for help. This change brings one school of critics to the conclusion that the psalm is really composed of two separate psalms. Such a conclusion is not at all necessary when one grants that, despite the psalmist's confidence in God, the force of actual circumstances induces him to cry to God for help in a very real world. Even when assured of God's favor, we need continually to recognize our need of Him and to request His aid.

8. Seek ye my face. This verse is the dialogue of a beautiful fellowship between David and his God. God had said to him: "Seek ye my face." David reminds God of His command, and from the depths of his heart replies, "I will seek thy face." Here is intimacy indeed, resembling the friendship that existed between Moses and God (see Ex. 33:11). Precious is that fellowship with God which, in time of need, finds the soul speaking to itself the counsel of God. The preciousness of God's favor as shown in His face looking upon His children is one of the richest concepts in the Psalter. Compare Num. 6:25.

9. Hide not. See on Ps. 4:6.

Put not. David prays for continued fellowship with God.

God of my salvation. Past mercies are always a reason for continued blessings. As God has saved us hitherto, we may plead the continuance of His saving power.

10. Forsake me. Sometimes parents desert their children, but God never deserts His (see Isa. 49:14, 15; 63:16). The verse is a sort of proverb.

Take me up. From the Heb. *'asaph*, literally, "to gather." *'Asaph* is used of hospitable reception (see Joshua 20:4; Judges 19:15, 18).

11. Way. Compare Ps. 25:4, 5.

A plain path. Or, "a level way" (see Ps. 26:12).

12. Will. Heb. *nephesh*, generally translated "soul" (see on Ps. 16:10), but here almost equivalent to "will." A parallel may be found in Ugaritic (see pp. 618, 619), where *npsh* means not only "soul," but also "desire," or "will."

False witnesses. David had frequently been falsely accused (see on Ps. 7:3; cf. 1 Sam. 24:12; 26:18).

Breathe out cruelty. Compare the expression describing Saul's vehement persecuting zeal, "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1).

13. I had fainted. These words do not occur in the original. They are inserted to complete the evident meaning of the psalmist: "What would have become of me, if I had not believed in the goodness of God!" So many and formidable are his enemies that he would collapse were it not for his sure belief that he will ultimately see a revelation of God's goodness on earth (see Job 19:25–27). This marks a sublimity of faith devoutly to

be desired by every one of God's children. Faith could lapse into fear, if hope did not keep aflame.

14. Wait on the Lord. The psalmist is primarily exhorting himself. His stronger self is encouraging his weaker nature not to despair (see on Ps. 25:3).

Of good courage. See Ps. 31:24. Compare Moses' counsel to Joshua (Deut. 31:7); God's counsel to Joshua (Joshua 1:6).

The psalm closes with a repetition of the injunction: "Wait, I say, on the Lord," as if the psalmist would fix deep in our minds the idea that at all times of doubt and danger, instead of despairing, we should go forward "in the strength of the Lord God" (see Ps. 71:16).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 Ed 164; MH 255
5 GC 634; PP 110; 1T 125; 6T 393
5, 6 MH 255
8 CT 457
11 7T 252
14 AH 343; TM 490; 7T 243

PSALM 28

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 28 was apparently created when the psalmist was under strong temptation to be drawn away with the wicked. The psalm has two contrasting divisions. The change from the cry for deliverance from trouble of vs. 1–5, to the expression of gratitude for relief in vs. 6–9, is made with dramatic abruptness. The prayer is especially appropriate for the Christian who feels himself drawn by habits that held him before his conversion.

On the superscription see p. 616.

1. Be not silent. Literally, "be not deaf." To the psalmist it is a baffling thought that God is silent.

Pit. Heb. *bor*, used of a waterpit, or cistern (see Gen. 37:20 Ex. 21:34), and hence symbolic of the grave. The dying are represented literally, as "descenders into the *bor*" (Ps. 30:3; 88:4; 143:7; Prov. 1:12; Isa. 38:18; Eze. 26:20; etc.).

2. Supplications. Note the plural: his entreaties are many.

Lift up my hands. A common attitude in prayer (see Lam. 3:41).

Oracle. Heb. *debir*, "the holy of holies." We stretch out our hands toward God's dwelling place in the heavens.

3. Draw me not. Compare Ps. 26:9. The psalmist prays not to be drawn into the company of the wicked (see the Saviour's prayer, Matt. 6:13), and hence along to punishment with them.

Which speak peace. The class described are dissemblers (see Ps. 26:4; cf. Ps. 12:2).

4. Give them. On the sentiment of vs. 4, 5, see Isa. 1:20; 3:8–11; 5:18, 19; see also the discussion on imprecatory psalms, p. 624.

5. Works. God's doings in creation and in His providences (see Rom. 1:18–20). The wicked will be destroyed, not because of their malice toward the psalmist, but because of their malice toward God, which is revealed in their disregard of the evidences of His sovereignty in the natural world and in His dealings with men (see Ps. 8).

Destroy. Heb. *haras*, "throw down," "tear down" (see Jer. 24:6).

6. Blessed be the Lord. The psalmist has already in his own heart received the answer to his prayer, and now, with startling abruptness, breaks out in joyful declaration of praise. This sudden change from entreaty to thanksgiving is typical of many of the psalms (see Ps. 6, 12, 22, etc.).

Voice of my supplications. Echoing v. 2, and emphasizing the answer to the entreaty.

7. Shield. See Ps. 3:3; cf. Ps. 33:20; 59:11.

Song. The heart that trusts in God cannot help being vocal in singing.

8. Their strength. The psalmist closes the psalm with a thought of the people's welfare (see Ps. 3:8).

Saving strength. Literally, "stronghold of salvations."

His anointed. Especially the king, as chosen by God. All God's people, as consecrated to His service, are, in a sense, His anointed (see 1 Peter 2:5, 9).

9. Thine inheritance. The nation of Israel (see Deut. 4:20; 9:26, 29). The force of the psalmist's appeal lies in the pronouns "thy" and "thine." How can God fail to save His own?

Feed them. Or, "shepherd them." The close of the psalm suggests the tender shepherd of Ps. 80:1; Isa. 40:11; cf. Deut. 1:31; 32:11, 12.

Lift. Heb. *naśa'*, which also means "to carry" as in 2 Kings 4:19.

The last words of the psalm carry with them the blessing of the peace that passeth understanding.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

7 MH 256; TM 148

PSALM 29

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 29 has been entitled The Song of the Thunderstorm, The Song of the Seven Thunders. It is typical of all the Hebrew nature psalms. The Hebrew poet is never satisfied merely to paint word pictures of nature. He always sees in nature the power and glory of her Creator (God's name [*Yahweh*] appears 18 times in the psalm). In this psalm a storm is thrillingly described from its beginning, through the height of its intensity, until it dies away. The structure of the poem exhibits elaborate symmetry, which appears in the prelude (vs. 1, 2), in the description of the storm with its sevenfold repetition of the phrase "the voice of the Lord" (vs. 3–9), and in the conclusion (vs. 10, 11). It is a verbal cameo.

The psalm describes the fury of a great storm originating over the sea, accompanied by gale winds, by peals of thunder, and by fiery flashes of lightning, coming in from the Mediterranean and sweeping over the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains before it loses its force in the eastern desert. The poem finds numerous detailed parallels in Ugaritic (see pp. 618, 619). Of these may be mentioned the tricolons of vs. 1 and 2 (give) and of vs. 4 and 5 (voice), and the names "Lebanon" and "Sirion" (see on Deut. 3:9) of v. 6. The Ugaritic has also cleared up several obscurities (see on vs. 6, 8).

Tradition says that in the Second Temple this psalm was sung on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The psalm now forms a part of the synagogue service on the first day of Pentecost and is included in the Sabbath liturgy.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Mighty. Heb. *bene 'elim*, the translation of which is uncertain. The LXX reads, "sons of God," by which possibly the angels are meant (see on Job 1:6). The parallelism of Ps. 89:6 (the only other occurrence of the phrase in the psalms) seems to lend support to this idea.

Glory. The psalmist acknowledges God as the God of glory and might. The word "glory" is used as a climax in v. 9 (see Ps. 68:34).

2. The beauty of holiness. Literally, "in holy adornment." This phrase appears again in Ps. 96:9. Beyond the attiring of the body is the adorning of the soul. No external comeliness can compare with the beauty of holy character (see 1 Peter 3:3, 4). In this prelude, if angels are intended by the phrase "mighty" (see on Ps. 29:1), the psalmist lifts us from the earth to heaven by calling on the angels to praise Him whose power is manifested in the thunderstorm about to be described.

3. The voice of the Lord. In the verbal symphony of vs. 3–9 the psalmist describes what is obviously his own recollection of a thunderstorm sweeping in from the Mediterranean Sea, breaking in fury on Lebanon, and then dying away in the east, leaving the desert warm and peaceful. To him, thunder is "the voice of the Lord" (see Ps. 18:13). The phrase is used seven times in vs. 3–9.

God of glory. Compare the expression "King of glory" (Ps. 24:7–10). The word "glory" is repeated three times in Ps. 29:1–3.

Many waters. Or, "great waters."

4. Powerful. Literally, "with power." The psalmist sees certain of God's attributes displayed in the storm.

Full of majesty. Literally, "in majesty." The thunder is beginning to roll over the land.

5. Breaketh the cedars. The storm swoops down upon the Lebanon Mountains, famous for their cedars, and the heavy wind breaks the mighty trees. The lightning, too, may have added to the destruction by shattering many a stately cedar.

6. Them. In the Hebrew this pronoun appears as a suffix to the verb in the form *–em*. The form is actually an archaic grammatical (enclitic) form not understood by the Jewish scholars who added the pronunciation to the vowelless text from the 7th century A.D. and on. Ugaritic (see p. 618) has shown that the ending *–em* should remain untranslated, so that the passage should be rendered: "He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox" (RSV). The mountains of Lebanon and Sirion themselves are meant, which appear to skip under the impact of the storm.

Skip like a calf. See Ps. 68:16; 114:4.

Sirion. The Sidonian name for Mt. Hermon, the highest mountain in the Anti-Lebanon range, towering 9,232 feet above sea level (see on Deut. 3:9).

Unicorn. Rather, "wild ox" (see on Ps. 22:21).

7. Divideth. Literally, "cut," "hew out." The verse describes the vivid, zigzag, serpentlike flashes of the lightning.

8. Wilderness of Kadesh. Before the discovery of the Ugaritic texts it was thought that the storm was pictured as passing over all Palestine, from Lebanon in the north to Kadesh on the southern border, about 45 mi. (70.4 km.) southwest of Beersheba (see Num. 20:16). Kadesh was identified with Kadesh-barnea, the place from which the Hebrews sent the spies into Canaan (Num. 13:17–20) and from which the people were

made to retreat into the wilderness because of their murmuring (Num. 14). However, a study of the Ugaritic texts (see p. 618) has shown that the term "wilderness of Kadesh" was a name for the Syrian Desert (see on v. 3).

9. Hinds to calve. Obviously because of fear induced by the thunderstorm. Certain Arabian poets, also Plutarch and Pliny, have recorded this phenomenon.

The RSV translation "oaks" instead of "hinds" supplies a better parallelism. But it is questionable whether the Heb. *'ayyaloth* ("hinds" KJV) can properly be considered the plural of *'ayil*, "oak." The normal plural of *'ayil* is *'elim* (see Isa. 1:29).

Discovereth. Heb. *chaśaph*, "to strip," "to lay bare."

His temple. Probably here not the tabernacle, but the world of nature.

Every one. Or, "everything." All things—the thunder, the lightning, the crashing of the trees, the shaking of the wilderness, the leaves being stripped from the trees—declare the power and glory of God. "Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God" (Coleridge). Compare Ps. 19:2. It is a good thing for us to stand in awe in the presence of the violent phenomena of nature, and then to lift our hearts in praise to the God of majesty and power. The universal chorus of praise reminds us of the continuous adoration of the seraphim in Isaiah's vision (see Isa. 6:2, 3). With the climactic description of this verse, the storm subsides, and the psalmist turns to quiet meditation and to a declaration of God's sovereignty and His wonderful gift of peace.

10. Flood. Some see a reference here to the Noachian Deluge, but it seems more natural to continue the description of the thunderstorm and see in the flood a picture of the heavy rain accompanying the storm, and its results.

King for ever. As God was in the storm now passed, so He will preside as absolute sovereign forever. There is a finality to the declaration that brings calm and confidence to the soul after the commotion and consternation of the storm.

11. Strength. The God whose power is seen so strikingly in the storm is abundantly able to uphold His people (see Isa. 40:29–31).

Peace. The most gracious gift that Heaven can bestow upon mortals (see Ps. 85:8, 10; John 14:27; Phil. 4:7; 1 Thess. 5:23). There is no sweeter word in any language. Churchill said, "Outside, the storms of war may blow and the lands may be lashed with the fury of its gales, but in our own hearts … there is peace." Thus the symphony of Ps. 29, which has swelled to an ear-shattering crescendo, ends in the softest pianissimo (Soncino, on the Psalms). "Peace be unto you" (John 20:21, 26), says the Prince of Peace.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 6T 366
2 CT 245; 4T 555; 6T 363
9 Ed 308; MB 70; 9T 30

PSALM 30

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 30 is a psalm of thanksgiving celebrating the recovery from great danger, probably a serious illness. The significance of the words in the superscription, "the dedication of the house of David," is not clear. It is possible that Ps. 30 was composed by David for the dedication of his palace, or for the dedication of the altar at the future Temple site on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite after the outbreak of pestilence (1 Chron. 21:14 to 22:1). The psalm is distinctly personal. The

poet expresses his deep gratitude to God for His goodness and details his experiences during his illness. The psalm is now read at the Feast of Dedication (*Chanukah*).

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Extol. Exalt, make supreme in thought and affection.

Lifted me up. Heb. *dillithani*, from the root *dalah*, used of drawing water out of a well (see Ex. 2:16, 19). The psalmist exalts God for drawing him up from the dangers mentioned in vs. 2, 3.

2. Cried. The message of his cry is given in vs. 8–10.

Healed. Although the word may be used metaphorically for the removal of mental distress (see Ps. 41:4), it may include here both mental and bodily suffering. David's grief when he saw the sufferings of his people during the plague seems to have overwhelmed him (see 2 Sam. 24:13–17; see Introduction to Ps. 30).

3. My soul. Or, "me" (see on Ps. 16:10).

Grave. Heb. *she'ol*, the figurative abode of the dead (see on Prov. 15:11). The most natural explanation is to consider that the psalmist had been so severely ill that he felt he had been at the point of death.

Pit. See on Ps. 28:1.

4. Sing. When we are blessed of God, we wish others to join us in praising Him (see on Ps. 9:11; 34:3).

Saints. Heb. *chasidim* (see Additional note on Ps. 36).

Remembrance. Or, "memorial." God's name, or character, is revealed in the memory of His dealings with men.

5. But a moment. God's anger is very short in the case of one who sins, repents, confesses, and prays for mercy (vs. 8–10).

In his favour. Unlike His wrath, His favor is enduring; it lasts throughout men's lives (see Ps. 16:11).

May endure. Heb. *lin*, "to spend the night". The idea expressed by the Hebrew is "weeping comes in the evening to spend the night, but in the morning there is joy".

Joy. Heb. *rinnah*, "a cry of joy." The suddenness of joy in the morning is represented in the Hebrew by the simple "at dawn, a shout of joy," without a verb. As the sun in tropical lands, without a long period of twilight, seems to burst into full glory above the horizon, so the light of God's love suddenly dispels the darkness of sadness (see Isa. 26:20; 54:7, 8). If we have the friendship of God, the night of sorrow will always give way to the morning of joy. The parallelism is carefully preserved in the pairs of words: "anger"—"favour"; "moment"—"life"; "night"—"morning"; "weeping"—"joy."

6. In my prosperity. The psalmist contrasts his present and former experiences, and tells what he has learned through experience. When we begin to feel self-confident, God may step in and by suffering and affliction show us that permanent security is found only in Him. Happy the man who learns the lesson without having to suffer the loss of friends, property, or health.

Never be moved. A graphic expression of the extreme self-confidence that the psalmist felt at one time in his life.

7. To stand strong. This sentence reads literally, "Yahweh, in thy favor thou didst establish a stronghold [or strength] for my mountain." The meaning is not entirely clear,

but there seems to be a suggestion of the psalmist's self-sufficiency in a time of great prosperity, when he was forgetful that God's favor had made him strong.

Hide thy face. The psalmist's illness or danger was to him a sign of the withdrawal of God's favor (see on Ps. 13:1).

Troubled. Heb. *bahal*, "to be disturbed," "to be terrified." Compare its use in Ex. 15:15; Judges 20:41; 1 Sam. 28:21; etc.

9. What profit? Verses 9, 10 record the psalmist's prayer. What value would it be to the infinite God if the psalmist should die (see Ps. 6:5; 88:10–12; Isa. 38:18, 19)? The argument "offers a touching picture of the psalmist's childlike intimacy and communion with God" (Oesterley). Such type of plea is typically Hebraic.

10. Be thou my helper. Through suffering, he has learned that his only help is found in God.

11. Thou hast turned. Note the sharp contrast: "mourning … dancing," "sackcloth … gladness" (see Isa. 61:3).

Dancing. The evidence of joy. Little children, uninhibited, dance when they are happy and grateful (see Ex. 15:20; Jer. 31:4, 13; see on 2 Sam. 6:14).

Sackcloth. The garb of the mourner (seeJob 16:15; Isa. 3:24).

12. For ever. Literally, "for an age," that is, during the psalmist's lifetime. The psalmist purposes in his heart to thank God in all the activities of his life. He has learned the lesson of adversity that will fit him to survive prosperity.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–46T 366
4, 5 ML 338
5 GC 350

PSALM 31

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 31 is a heartfelt prayer for deliverance from trouble, enlivened by a sincere trust in God's ability to deliver. It is characterized by a galaxy of rich figures describing the distress of the persecuted and the hope that comes in time of trouble. Some suggest as its background the experience of David in the Wilderness of Maon (see 1 Sam. 23:19–26), although the theme could apply to many similar occasions. The psalm was a favorite of Huss, Luther, and Melanchthon.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Put my trust. See on Ps. 7:1. Verses 1–3 of Ps. 31 are similar to Ps. 71:1–3.

Be ashamed. Compare Ps. 25:2.

2. Bow down thine ear. See on Ps. 17:6.

Rock. Heb. *ṣur* (see on Ps. 18:2).

3. Rock. Heb. *sela‘* (see on Ps. 18:2).

For thy name's sake. That is, for the sake of your reputation, or, for the sake of your character. This phrase is full of meaning. Truly prayed, it indicates that the suppliant bows to the divine will and is willing to have the personal problems of his life merge into the larger program of God. He realizes that the honor of God is at stake in all the operations of the divine government, and believes that God would be dishonored if the present request were refused. God is pledged to answer such a prayer but only in a manner that is in harmony with the divine will, since whatever God does is a revelation of His unchangeable character.

To pray "for thy name's sake," when the elements for answered prayer have not been met, is presumption. It is, in fact, a request for God not to answer prayer. A favorable response under such circumstances would bring dishonor to God's name and deny His word.

4. Privily. An animal snare was laid so that the wild animal could not see the trap set for him.

5. Spirit. Heb. *ruach*, the animating principle of life; the energy which comes from God and animates the body. At death the spirit is described as going to God (see Eccl. 12:7; Acts 7:59). However, in this state there is no consciousness (Ps. 146:4).

The words of the psalmist were Jesus' last words on the cross (see Luke 23:46; cf. Acts 7:59); they are said to have been the last words of Bernard, Huss, Luther, Melanchthon, and many other servants of God. We too, in the hour of extremity, can safely trust our case to God.

Thou hast redeemed. The witness of the past, the assurance of the present, the pledge of the future.

6. I have hated. The LXX, Syriac, and one Hebrew manuscript read, "thou hast hated."

Lying vanities. Perhaps idols, as concepts of vanity, are intended. By contrast the psalmist trusts in God (v. 5).

7. My soul. Used idiomatically for the personal pronoun "me" (see on Ps. 16:10).

8. Shut me up. See Deut. 32:30.

In a large room. Better, "a roomy place" (see Ps. 4:1; 18:19).

9. Have mercy upon me. In vs. 9–13 the psalmist turns from his strong assertion of faith in God to a poignant expression of his present sufferings. In his suffering he is tossed between hope and dejection. He seems to say, "Mine is a special case" (see Ps. 6).

Belly. Reference to physical suffering. "Soul" suggests mental distress. There seems to be at least a partial recognition of the interrelation of the mind and the body. Compare our modern psychosomatic emphasis in the diagnosis and treatment of disease, and the contemporary emphasis on psychiatry.

11. A reproach. With the description of rejection from society in vs. 11, 12, compare Job 16:20; 19:13–19; see on Ps. 22:7.

12. As a dead man. He has passed completely out of the mind of his associates. Perhaps to be utterly forgotten is even worse than being despised (see Ps. 88:4, 5).

13. Slander. Or, "whispering," or, "evil report."

Fear. Heb. *magor*, "terror" (compare the use of *magor* in Isa. 31:9; Jer. 6:25; 20:3–10; 46:5). An exclamation indicating the psalmist's intense fear of everyone and everything he met (see Jer. 20:10).

14. I trusted. Verses 14–18 are an expression of great trust, in which, despite the anguish expressed in vs. 9–13, the psalmist says, "Thou art my God." This is the triumph of faith.

15. My times. All the varied events of life.

"Our times are in His Hand Who saith 'A whole I planned, Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!'"

—ROBERT BROWNING, "Rabbi Ben Ezra."

Prayer renews our faith and trust. Acquiescence puts our case fully in the hands of God.

16. Make thy face to shine. Compare the Aaronic blessing (see Num. 6:25; see on Ps. 4:6).

17. Be ashamed. Compare Ps. 25:2.

Be silent. That is, "be dead." The idea is continued in v. 18.

Grave. Heb. *she'ol* (see on Prov. 15:11).

19. How great. In vs. 19–24 the hope that appears as a golden thread through the suffering depicted in the psalm now flowers in triumphant assurance, and the psalmist rises to heights of praise.

Before. Or, "in the sight of."

20. In the secret. Literally, "in the hiding place" (see on Ps. 27:5). Milton's phrase, "dark with excessive bright," explains how one can be hidden in light.

The strife of tongues. Slander (see on v. 13).

21. Strong city. Or, "fortified city."

22. Haste. Heb. *chaphaz*, generally meaning "hurry away," as in alarm or fright. Compare its use in Deut. 20:3; 2 Sam 4:4. In a single moment of confusion the psalmist despaired, crying out that he was on the point of death. Satan seizes such opportunities to drag us down.

23. Love the Lord. The psalmist calls on all God's children to unite with him in devotion to God. He bases his appeal on his experience in trusting God in times of adversity (see on Ps. 30:4).

24. Good courage. See on Ps. 27:14.

Hope in the Lord. Literally, "wait for the Lord." Hoping and waiting go hand in hand along the Christian way. Hope is a tonic to Christian experience.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 SL 54

20 MH 90; 6T 393

PSALM 32

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 32 is a penitential psalm (see p. 624). It unites personal penitence with instruction to others. The psalm has the profound purpose of showing the blessedness of the forgiveness of sin. It was composed after David committed his grievous sin with Bath-sheba (see PP 724) and is a record of his confession and the forgiveness he obtained (see 2 Sam. 11; 12). Verses 1–5 deal with David's personal experience; vs. 6–11 give counsel. The psalm is reported to have been a favorite of Augustine's to the moment of death. The theologian had the psalm written on the wall, that he might see it from his sickbed.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 628.

1. Blessed. Heb. *'ashre* (see on Ps. 1:1). Verses 1, 2 describe sin under three names: transgression, sin, iniquity (see Ex. 34:7) and discuss further the principle of justification by faith.

Transgression. Heb. *pesha'*, signifying "rebellion," departure from God, and hence implying willful sin.

Forgiven. Heb. *naśa'*; for comment see on Ps. 25:18.

Sin. Heb. *chaṭa'ah*. Sin from the point of view of missing the mark, failing to do one's duty.

Covered. Hence concealed, no longer to be brought against the sinner (see Ps. 85:2). Sin is not covered in the sense that it is overlooked. There is only one basis for the forgiveness of sin, namely repentance. Confession (1 John 1:9) is of value only when accompanied by repentance. Some Christians confuse the two processes and claim forgiveness on the ground of acknowledgment of guilt alone. But God is interested in the practical aspects of the case. Besides sorrow for sin, repentance includes the expulsion of sin from the life. Such expulsion is the act of the soul itself (DA 466) as energized by power from above. Forgiveness automatically follows such an experience. God can forgive all sins that are driven from the life.

Many Christians seem to be more concerned with obtaining forgiveness for their sins than with ridding the soul of all known sin. They strive to keep their sins "confessed up to date," a noble objective, but one that has merit only if the confession has in each case been accompanied by an expulsion of the sin.

"The righteousness of Christ will not cover one cherished sin" (COL 316). Before this precious gift can be imputed, the old, tattered garments of inherited and cultivated wrongdoing must be laid aside. This was the experience of David. It was on this basis that he obtained forgiveness for his great sin. His repentance was genuine. He loathed the sin of which he had been guilty (see SC 28, 29).

2. Imputeth not. That is, God does not reckon the sin to the sinner's account. God not only forgives sin but also accepts the truly repentant as if he had never sinned (SC 67). The sin has been laid upon Jesus, our substitute, with the result that "we are not to be anxious about what Christ and God think of us, but about what God thinks of Christ, our Substitute" (EGW GCB April 23, 1901, p. 420).

Iniquity. The Heb. *'awon*, "moral distortion," "crookedness," "guilt."

Guile. Heb. *remiyyah*, "deceit." No falseness in himself that he knew of, and none in the sight of others or before God. His confession is sincere. Compare Rev. 14:5.

3. I kept silence. David refused to confess his sin even to himself. For a whole year after his sin in regard to Uriah and Bath-sheba, David lived in apparent security (see PP 723). But he was not free of severe mental conflicts and resultant physical suffering (see Ps. 6:2, 3; 31:9).

Roaring. Heb. *she'agah* (see on Ps. 22:1).

4. Thy hand was heavy. David is referring to the proddings of a guilty conscience.

Moisture. Life forces. The Hebrew of this sentence is obscure. The LXX presents a very different reading, "I became thoroughly miserable while a thorn was fastened in me."

Selah. See p. 629.

5. Acknowledged my sin. With acknowledgment and confession came forgiveness. On the three words for sin employed in this verse, see on vs. 1, 2.

I said. For a fuller understanding of this passage, see 2 Sam. 12:1–14; cf. Luke 15:18.

Thou. Emphatic in the Hebrew. Augustine is reported to have said, "The voice is not yet so much upon the lips, when—the wound is healed."

6. For this. Or, "because of this." Forgiveness bestows on the one forgiven the divine compulsion of telling others (see Acts 5:42).

When thou mayest be found. The statement of the psalmist implies that there will be a time when men will seek forgiveness and will not find it. How can this be true if God is

"merciful and gracious, longsuffering" (Ex. 34:6), and willing to "abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7)? Naturally at the end of human probation such a condition will exist (see Amos 8:11, 12; Rev. 22:11). But the experience may come earlier to individual sinners. Many feel that they can indulge in sin, for a time at least, without serious consequences to themselves, and then, at a convenient moment, repent and obtain forgiveness. But the tragedy of sin is that it fastens itself so securely upon the soul and becomes so firmly a part of the life pattern, especially when perpetrated in the light of full knowledge, that there is often no desire later to give it up. Without such a basic desire there can be no forgiveness. In many such cases there may arise an outward desire for salvation and a seemingly sincere request for riddance of sin, but if, fundamentally, there is no desire to give up the cherished sins of the heart, the search for salvation is vain.

Sometimes the fear of consequences drives the sinner to seek pardon, as was the case with Judas (Matt. 27:3–5); or the goal of material advantage lures him, as it did Esau (Heb. 12:16, 17). But if the threatened consequences had been removed from Judas, or the birthright restored to Esau, each of these men would have pursued his old sinful course. Such seeking God cannot honor (see on Ps. 32:1).

However, the sinner may rest assured that God will not turn a deaf ear to any sincere pleading for pardon. At the same time let him be warned that willful sin, persisted in, may bring a condition in which there is no longer a desire to be cleansed of the defilement. It is this kind of condition that is described in Heb. 10:26, where the tense of the verb allows the following translation, "If we persist in wilful sin … there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

In the floods. The forgiven soul will stand secure, high upon the rock of God's salvation. The figure was impressive to the Hebrew, who was familiar with the sudden rise of water in ravines and gullies after heavy rain, and its attendant terror to the inhabitants.

7. Hiding place. See Ps. 9:9; 27:5.

Songs of deliverance. A forgiven man cannot remain silent. "How can I keep from singing?" Compare the song of Moses and Miriam (Ex. 15). When the Christian sings, others around him join in his joy.

Selah. See p. 629.

8. Instruct. Heb. *śakal*, the root of the word "maschil" appearing in the superscription to this psalm. For a discussion of "maschil" see p. 628.

Some regard vs. 8, 9 as a statement of the psalmist's pledge to fulfill his vow to "teach transgressors" the ways of God (Ps. 51:13). However, it seems more natural to consider these verses to be God's response to the experience of the psalmist described in vs. 1–8. David had gone astray because he had departed from God's way and had forsaken God's guidance. In order to prevent a future repetition of his tragic experience or a moral fall of any nature, he needed most a rededication of purpose that henceforth he would permit God to guide him. God's gracious promise gave needed assurance of future victory, and thus inspired hope.

Security against moral lapses is found in the course here outlined. The Christian must be constantly instructed in the divine ways, so that he may discern clearly between good and evil. He must know the divine will in every matter, else he will not be able to recognize the temper in his disguise. Because of the complexities of life and the innumerable ways in which the adversary may introduce his specious reasonings, it is

necessary to receive fresh instruction daily. This is obtained by a prayerful and purposeful reading of the Bible. A Christian thus instructed, who purposes in his heart that he will do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know just what course to pursue in any matter (see DA 668; cf. Ed 282; CT 17, 18).

9. As the horse. The psalmist contrasts the brute, which, having no understanding, must be restrained by force, with man, to whom God has given intelligence (see Isa. 1:3; Jer. 8:6).

10. Sorrows. Or, "pains." The verse is a beautiful example of antithetic parallelism (see p. 24).

11. Shout for joy. The psalmist enjoys drawing others into the chorus of praise (see Ps. 64:10).

The psalm is the heart history of one who sinned, for a time refused to confess, endured the torture of guilt, finally acknowledged and confessed, and gained forgiveness. It might be called the psalm of justification by faith.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 SC 28
1–4 PP 724
5–7 PP 725
8 Ed 282;7T 94;9T 202
9 FE 207

PSALM 33

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 33 is a festive hymn, praising Jehovah as Creator, Supreme Sovereign, and Faithful Provider for those who fear Him. It was probably composed on some occasion of national victory. Although not an acrostic psalm, the poem consists of 22 verses, as many as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The name of the Deity throughout the psalm is *Yahweh*, and the psalm presents a grand array of the attributes of God. On the authorship of the psalm see PP 716.

1. Rejoice. Heb. *ranan*, "to give a ringing cry in joy." Verses 1–3 form the introduction to the psalm and are an invitation to the righteous to praise Jehovah with musical instruments.

Comely. Heb. *na'wah*, "fitting," "seemly." The grace of gratitude befits the just.

2. Harp. Heb. *kinnor*, literally, "lyre" (see p. 34).

Psaltery. Heb. *nebel*, an instrument like the harp (see p. 33). The word "and" does not occur in the Hebrew text. It is more natural to translate the phrase, "with a harp of ten strings." Only the best is good enough for the worship of Jehovah. For a general discussion of instruments used in the ancient Temple service see pp. 29–42.

3. A new song. New favors demand fresh appreciation and new hymns of praise (see Ps. 40:3; 96:1). We should not be confined always to the use of that which has been used continually. Changed circumstances require appropriate and timely expression in words of prayer and praise.

4. The Lord is right. Verses 4–21 state the reasons for praising Jehovah. Among these reasons is the fact that Jehovah is righteous and merciful (vs. 4, 5, 18; see Ps. 25:10; 26:3; 36:5, 6).

6. By the word. The second reason for praise (see on v. 4) is that Jehovah created all things. Jesus is declared to be the "Word" (John 1:1), who made "all things" (John 1:3).

Host of them. The heavenly bodies, as indicated by the parallel structure of the verse.

7. Heap. Heb. *ned*, the word used to describe the waters in Ex. 15:8 and Joshua 3:13–16 in the narrative of the crossing of the Red Sea and of the Jordan. Some translators regard *ned* as a shorter form of *no'd*, "skin-bottle" (see RSV). *No'd* appears in the sentence, "Put thou my tears into thy bottle" (Ps. 56:8). This interpretation is supported by several ancient versions.

In storehouses. Compare Job 38:8–11; Jer. 5:22.

9. He spake, and it was done. Or simply, "he spake, and it was," the word "done" being supplied; or perhaps better, "he spake, and it became." "He" is emphatic, as is indicated in the Hebrew by the use of the pronoun; God is set forth as Creator, in sharp contrast with any god that might claim creative ability. The sublimity of the language used to describe the creative acts of God is unsurpassed in literature (see Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26).

Stood fast. Or, "stood forth," or simply "stood," heightening the sublime simplicity of the synonymous parallelism of this verse (see p. 622).

10. The Lord bringeth. The third reason for praise (see on vs. 4, 6) is that Jehovah is sovereign (vs. 10, 11).

11. Standeth for ever. Note the contrast between the phrases of vs. 10, 11: "counsel of the heathen," "counsel of the Lord"; "devices of the people," "thoughts of his heart."

12. Blessed. See on Ps. 1:1. This verse anticipates vs. 18–20, introducing the idea of God's special relationship to Israel.

13. Looketh from heaven. See on Ps. 11:4. The fourth reason for praise (see on vs. 4, 6, 10) is that Jehovah is omnipresent and omniscient.

All the sons. Jehovah is the God of all men, although all men may not recognize their allegiance to Him (see Matt. 5:45).

15. Alike. Heb. *yachad*, "the entire number." The meaning is that God fashions the hearts of all men, not that the hearts are fashioned in the same manner. The word for "fashion," *yaṣar*, is used to describe the creation of man and beast (Gen. 2:7, 8, 19). It is used also of the prenatal development of man (Jer. 1:5; cf. Isa. 44:2). Hence the psalmist may here refer to the creation of the human mind. Or he may have meant the subsequent influencing and molding of human thought.

16. No king saved. The fifth reason for praise (see on vs. 4, 6, 10, 13) is that Jehovah is omnipotent. By employing references to the relative impotence of rulers, strong men, and cavalry, the psalmist implies that Jehovah alone is omnipotent. This is an extraordinary poetic device, its implied meaning being discernible only to the attentive reader.

18. The eye of the Lord. See on Ps. 32:8. The sixth reason for praise (see on vs. 4, 6, 10, 13, 16) is that Jehovah can be depended on to protect His chosen people.

19. Famine. The inhabitants of Palestine were frequently exposed to famine.

20. Waiteth. See on Ps. 27:14.

21. Heart. See Ps. 13:5.

Name. See on Ps. 7:17.

22. According as we hope. A plaintive closing appeal that Israel may speedily realize the fulfillment of her hopes and enjoy evidence of Jehovah's tender consideration. Jacob gave Israel a lesson of hope and trustful waiting in the midst of the last words uttered on his deathbed (see Gen. 49:18).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4, 5 8T 271
5 MH 418; SC 92
6 MH 415; PP 44, 112
6–9 8T 259
8 MH 438; 8T 285
9 COL 81; DA 270; Ed 129, 254; MH 77, 414; PP 44, 112
10 AA 574
10, 11 PP 124
12 8T 271
12–14 PK 50
13 PK 265
13, 14 PP 124
14, 15 MH 166, 438; 8T 285
16, 17 PP 716
18 MH 229; 5T 424
18, 19 MH 417
18–21 8T 271
20 SR 102

PSALM 34

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 34 is another of the alphabetical, or acrostic, psalms (see p. 625). It merges personal gratitude with general thanksgiving. The theme of God's care for the afflicted is presented in various aspects rather than with clearly conceived logical development. The psalm has 22 verses (23 in the Hebrew, which has the superscription as v. 1), each beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in the regular order, with the following exceptions: the letter ***waw*** is omitted, and the letter ***pe'*** appears as the beginning letter of the last verse.

On the superscription see p. 616; see also on 1 Sam. 21:10, 13.

1. At all times. See Eph. 5:20. The psalmist begins the psalm in a personal tone.

Soul. That is, "I" (see on Ps. 16:10).

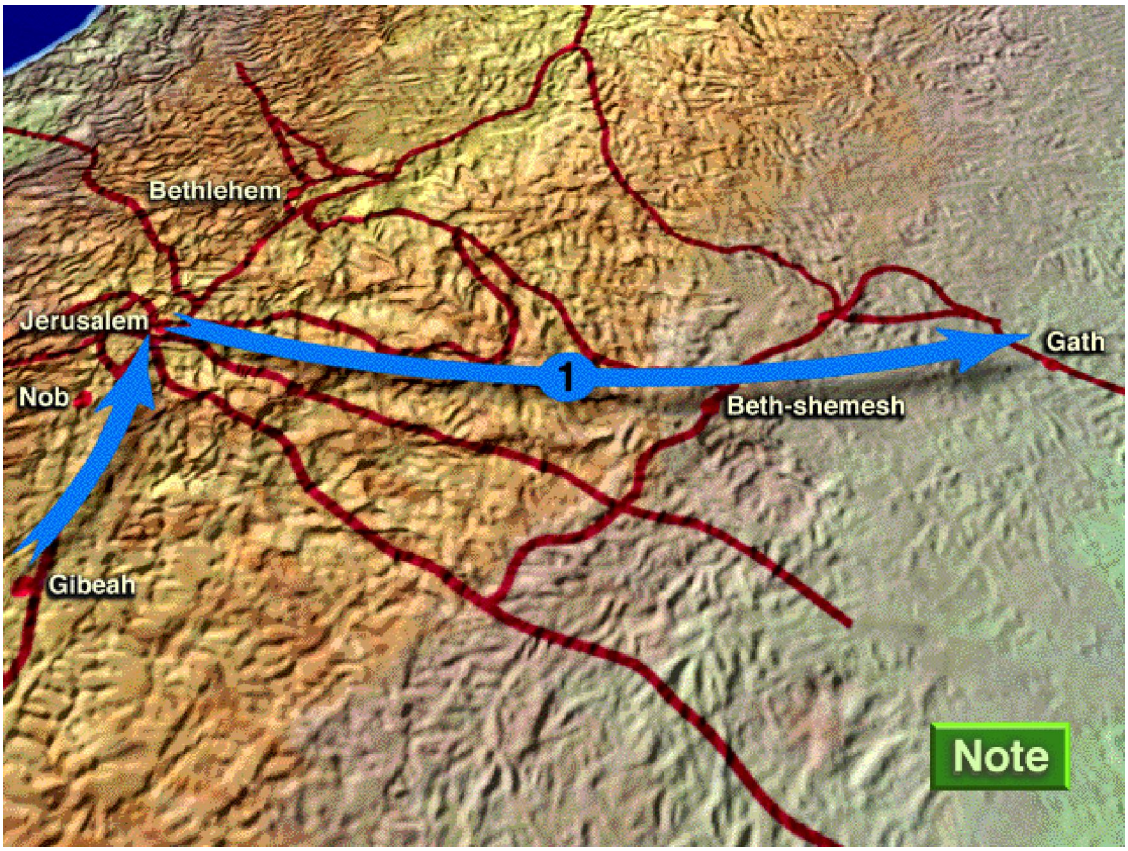
3. With me. The psalmist invites the "humble" to join in praising Jehovah. We "magnify" God when we "ascribe … greatness" to Him (see Deut. 32:3). "All hail the power of Jesus' name." "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so" (Ps. 107:2). In the modern synagogue service Ps. 34:3 is spoken by the reader as he takes the Torah from the ark.

Name. See on Ps. 7:17.

4. He heard me. Here begins the psalmist's expression of the secret of his gratitude. He is grateful for what God did for him, for what He has done for others, and for the lessons that God has taught him by way of experience.

5. They looked. Probably the "humble" of v. 2; possibly, men in general who have experienced God's tenderness as had the psalmist. A number of Hebrew manuscripts, also the versions of Aquila and Jerome, and the Syriac, have the verb in the imperative "look ye."

Experimental Religion: God is Good
[8]



In fleeing from enemies, seen and unseen, we seem to be alone, forsaken, driven ahead through gloomy darkness to new perplexities that threaten both body and soul with destruction. Then suddenly from unexpected quarters comes swift deliverence. We realize that an Unseen Presence has once more turned past mistakes into steppingstones toward victory. The heart is filled with gratitude and praise, and another milepost of experience is erected to serve as an encouragement in future tests. Truly the Lord is good! Psalm 34:4-8
[9]

Historical background to 1 Samuel 21:10 if "Abimelech" is Achish of Gath.

Were lightened. Or, “brightened up” (see 2 Cor. 3:18). “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face.” Nothing is more beautiful than the radiant countenance

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[8]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 24:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

[9]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

of a real Christian. When God looks our way, all the world is sunlit. A slight change in pointing makes the verb an imperative (see on "they looked," v. 5), to be translated "beam ye [with joy]." The LXX also has the verb in the imperative.

6. This poor man. Probably the psalmist is referring to himself in the third person, thus presenting a touching picture for our observation.

This verse, according to the acrostic arrangement, should begin with *waw*; instead, the following letter, *zayin*, is the initial letter.

7. The angel of the Lord. On the ministry of heavenly angels see AA 153, 154; GC 511–513, 631, 632.

Encampeth. See Gen. 32:1, 2; 2 Kings 6:16, 17. The continual presence of guardian angels is one of the Christian's sweetest assurances.

8. O taste and see. The psalmist invites others not to take his word, but to put the matter to the test for themselves. "Taste" is from the Heb. *ta'am*, "to try the flavor of," here meaning, "to experience" (see Heb. 6:5; 1 Peter 2:3). The surest proof of religion is found in personal experience. Without Christian experience the religion of Christ is only theory, and as mere theory it has no saving power.

Good. Heb. *tob*, a word covering a wide range of qualities, such as "gracious," "kindly," "friendly." A meditation upon this attribute of God should serve to correct our sense of cold justice. We should be sensitive to the gentler elements of God's character. When tempted to forget gentleness in our relations with men, we need to think on this attribute of Deity.

Blessed. See on Ps. 1:1.

Man. Heb. *geber*, "the young, vigorous man." None is beyond the need of divine help. In the divine plan, self-sufficiency is impossible. Man needs God.

9. Saints. Heb. *qedoshim*, "holy ones" (see on Ps. 16:3; Lev. 19:2).

No want. See on Ps. 23:1.

10. Lions. For all their strength, young lions become famished, but those who reverence God lack nothing essentially good.

11. Children. Teacherlike, the psalmist offers instruction. Verses 11–14 constitute a unified piece of instruction in the varied matter of the psalm.

Fear of the Lord. For comment see on Ps. 19:9.

12. Desireth life. The question involves man's primal psychological "drives." All men want to live long and happily.

13. Keep thy tongue. See Ps. 15:2, 3; 39:1–3; Prov. 18:21; 1 Peter 3:10–12; James 3:2–10. Verses 13 and 14 answer the question of v. 12. The modern Jewish liturgy for daily use includes this verse.

Guile. Heb. *mirmah*, "deceit."

14. Depart from evil. See Ps. 37:27; Isa. 1:16, 17. Christian living is both negative and positive; we must go away from evil, and we must do good. Merely refraining from evil is not enough. We must be active in doing good.

15. Eyes of the Lord. See Ps. 32:8.

16. Face of the Lord. As the righteous are under "the eyes of the Lord," so the wicked find God's face turned against them. Both righteous and wicked are equally seen by God.

The remembrance. Compare Prov. 10:7.

17. Delivereth. Often in this life, and completely in the life to come. The promise does not guarantee complete deliverance here; but in the case of every righteous man, heaven will mean deliverance from *all* troubles.

18. Of a broken heart. A heart crushed by sorrow or suffering prepares a man to learn the most important lessons that God has to teach (see Ps. 119:71). The idea of the "broken heart" is frequent in the Bible (see Ps. 51:17; Isa. 61:1; 66:2).

19. Many are the afflictions. See on v. 17. Being a Christian does not necessarily exempt one from affliction, but it gives one strength to endure. However, it has been observed that the sufferings of the Christian are less than those of the unbeliever, who suffers also the effects of intemperance, of crime, of evil habits. Some of the rewards of right living are enjoyed in this life.

20. Keepeth all his bones. God protects the righteous from their enemies and watches over them (see on Matt. 10:28–30).

Not one of them. The general principle is that the righteous are under divine protection. In the Bible general principles are often expressed in concrete language (see Matt. 10:30, 31). In fulfillment of Scripture Jesus' bones were not broken (see John 19:36; cf. Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12; DA 771, 772).

21. Evil shall slay. Sin consumes itself. Death is the natural and inescapable consequence of sin.

Shall be desolate. Better, "shall be held guilty" (see Ps. 5:10).

22. Redeemeth. The thought of this verse is in contrast with that of v. 21.

Soul. See on Ps. 16:10.

Shall be desolate. See on v. 21. The repetition of the verb in vs. 21, 22 emphasizes the contrast between the fate of the wicked and the ultimate deliverance of those who trust in God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 PK 70
4–10 8T 271
5 MB 126
6, 7 TM 250
7 AA 153; CG 42; Ed 255; EW 189; GC 513, 632; ML 303; PK 176; PP 537; SR 406; 2T 272; 3T 373; 5T 475 (see under Ps. 91:11)
8 MH 461; SC 117; 5T 221; 8T 321
9 10 MYP 124
11 2T 398; 4T 140; 5T 324
12–14 PP 600
12–17 CH 628
13 CT 238
13–15 MYP 97
13–18 MYP 124
15 GC 621; LS 271; ML 176; 4T 598; 5T 177
15, 16 5T 212
17 ML 297
17, 18 CH 367; 8T 271

18 DA 300; FE 371, 451; ML 98; PK 436; SC 43; TM 250; 3T 240, 533; 4T 178, 259; 5T 173, 339, 474, 637 (see under Ps. 51:17; Isa. 57:15)

22 MH 250; 8T 272

PSALM 35

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 35 is one of the imprecatory psalms (see p. 624). It is the psalmist's cry of distress when he is being persecuted by men who were formerly his friends and who now requite his love with intense hatred. The psalm has three principal divisions, each closing with a vow of thanksgiving: (*a*) vs. 1–10, prayer; (*b*) vs. 11–18, a description of the enemies; and (*c*) vs. 19–28, an appeal for divine interposition. Some infer a possible historical background in the conspiracy of Absalom, with Ahithophel and his associates prominent in the picture.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Plead. Heb. *rib*, "to contend," or "to conduct a case against." *Rib* is also the root of the Hebrew word translated "them that strive." To get the force of this we should translate the clause, "Contend, Lord, with those that contend against me." See Ps. 43:1; 1 Sam. 24:15 for other occurrences of *rib*. The psalmist calls upon God to defend him against those who are accusing him falsely. The verse is an example of synonymous parallelism.

2. Shield and buckler. Both the smaller shield of Ps. 3:3 and the larger, stronger shield of Ps. 5:12 (see also on Ps. 18:2); here used to convey the idea of complete defense.

3. Stop the way. The Hebrew form translated by this phrase is *segor*. A change in vowel pointing to *sagar* gives us a noun that has been interpreted to mean the two-edged sword called in Greek *sagaris*. The reading of the KJV is supported by the LXX. The verse pictures God, in human language, as a warrior fighting at the side of the psalmist.

Soul. Or, "me" (see on Ps. 16:10).

4. Be confounded. In the psalms of imprecation, the cause of the psalmist is often identified with the cause of a righteous God (see Ps. 40:14, 15; see p. 624).

5. As chaff. See on Ps. 1:4.

The angel of the Lord. Compare 2 Kings 19:35.

6. Dark and slippery. Literally, "darkness and slipperiness." The enemies would flee down dark and slippery hills.

7. Their net. For comment see on Ps. 7:15; 9:15.

8. Him. The singular may here be used of the psalmist's enemies collectively. See further on Ps. 9:15, 16.

9. My soul. Or simply "I" (see on Ps. 16:10). The psalmist will rejoice, not in the destruction of the wicked, but in God's interposition.

10. All my bones. The entire body rejoices.

11. False witnesses. Literally, "witnesses of violence." Verses 11–18 describe the nature of the psalmist's enemies.

They laid to my charge. Rather, "they ask of me."

12. Spoiling. Literally, "loss of children," a touching picture of a person utterly bereaved. The psalmist feels alone in the world (see on Ps. 38:11).

13. Sackcloth. The garb of mourners.

I humbled my soul. The psalmist mourned, prayed, and fasted for those who were now his enemies. His friendly behavior in the past is now repaid by their hostility.

My prayer returned into mine own bosom. Rather, "my prayer—may it [or, it shall] return into my own bosom!" The psalmist asks that his prayer for his enemies be granted him, in proof of the sincerity of his attitude toward them.

14. Bowed down heavily. The outward forms of mourning among the Hebrews included going about unwashed and with untrimmed beard (see 2 Sam. 19:24). The psalmist's mourning was as complete as that for one next of kin.

15. Adversity. Literally, "stumbling." When the psalmist stumbled, his enemies rejoiced and banded together against him to prevent him from rising again.

The abjects. Heb. *nekim*, "smitten ones," referring perhaps to those less strong than the psalmist, who joined in the slander suggested in the verse.

Did tear. Slanderous tongues are like the sharp teeth of wild beasts, which tear their prey.

16. With hypocritical mockers in feasts. This phrase is obscure in the Hebrew. The LXX reads, "they tempted me, they mocked me with mockings."

Gnashed. See Job 16:9; Matt. 13:42, 50.

17. How long? See on Ps. 13:1.

Darling. Heb. *yechidah* (see on Ps. 22:20).

Lions. Frequently the psalmist compares enemies to lions (see Ps. 10:9; 17:12; 22:13).

18. Give thee thanks. The second section of the psalm, like the first (see v. 10), closes with a solemn and impressive vow of thanksgiving.

19. Without a cause. Throughout the psalm the writer protests his complete innocence. Some think this is the phrase to which Jesus referred when He said, "They hated me without a cause" (John 15:25). However, the same thought occurs again in Ps. 69:4. Since Ps. 35 is not strictly Messianic, and Ps. 69 is clearly so, it may be more logical to assume that Jesus was referring to the latter.

21. Aha. The enemies are pictured as seeing their desire fulfilled in the utter downfall of the psalmist.

22. Thou hast seen. Compare the clause "how long wilt thou look on?" (v. 17). From this point on, the psalm is more calm.

Keep not silence. Literally, "be not deaf" (see on Ps. 28:1).

25. Ah, so would we have it. Literally, "Aha, our soul!" idiomatic for the idea, "Aha, we have our heart's desire" (RSV).

27. Shout for joy. Because the cause of the psalmist is vindicated.

Prosperity. Heb. *shalom*, "peace." The close of the psalm is pitched to the key of victory, a far cry from the tone of the beginning.

28. Shall speak. Heb. *hagah*. This verb conveys the idea of speaking in a low voice, as of one musing on a gentle thought. It is translated "meditate" in Ps. 1:2.

Thy. God's salvation, not the psalmist's deliverance. Contemplation of God's goodness takes our thoughts away from ourselves.

All the day long. Continually. "Faithful work is praise and prayer" (Henry van Dyke).

PSALM 36

INTRODUCTION.—In Ps. 36 the psalmist celebrates the loving-kindness of God against a background of the depravity of the wicked. Verses 1–4 are a general description of human wickedness; vs. 5–9 give expression to the beauty of the attributes of God; and vs. 10–12 constitute a prayer of faith that God will reveal His goodness to all the upright in heart. The language of the psalm is extraordinarily beautiful.

Verses 1–4 are a succinct picture of a wicked man. Moral decline passes through three stages: (1) sin in defiance of conscience, (2) sin without condemnation of conscience, and (3) sin prompted by a conscience that has become totally depraved (Moulton).

Sin of the heart (vs. 1, 2) is followed by sin of the tongue (v. 3), and then by sin of the hand (v. 4)—a climactic analysis of wickedness.

On the superscription see p. 616. Note that the psalmist is called "his servant" in Ps. 35:27; see also the superscription to Ps. 18.

1. Saith. Heb. *ne'im*, "an utterance." The word occurs 361 times in all and is elsewhere used exclusively of divine utterances, generally in the expression "saith the Lord" (Gen. 22:16; etc.). Sometimes the prophet is presented as the speaker (Num 24:3, 15; Prov. 30:1). In the verse under consideration is a most unusual use of the word. Transgression is personified and presented as repeating a divine oracle. Sin comes to speak to the sinner as though it were the voice of God.

My heart. Several Hebrew manuscripts, the LXX, and the Syriac read "his heart." This reading seems to be more in harmony with the context. The first sentence then becomes literally, "the utterance of transgression [or, "transgression saith"] to the wicked in the midst of his heart."

Fear. Heb. *pachad*, "trembling," "dread." This is not the word for "fear" generally appearing in the expression "fear of the Lord" (see on Ps. 19:9). *Pachad* is not "fear" in the sense of "reverence," or "worship," but "fear" in the sense of "dread," as the "fear of the enemy" (Ps. 64:1), or "fear of evil" (Prov. 1:33). Paul quotes the second sentence of Ps. 36:1 in support of his thesis on the depravity of the wicked (Rom. 3:18).

2. Be found to be hateful. The Hebrew of this verse is very obscure. It reads literally, "For he flatters himself in his eyes, to find his iniquity to hate." Perhaps the psalmist means that the wicked deludes himself with the idea that he will not be discovered in his sin and therefore punished.

3. To be wise. Verses 3, 4 present a progression in evil: leaving off doing good, meditating evil, determining to do evil, doing evil without condemnation of conscience.

4. Mischief. Or, "vanity."

He abhorreth not evil. For the hopelessly depraved sinner the sinfulness of sin is no deterrent to action. He does not recognize the immoral quality of the sinful act.

5. Thy mercy. Heb. *chesed* (see on v. 7). With startling abruptness and in striking contrast with the matter of vs. 1–4, the psalmist turns to extolling the mercy and faithfulness of God (see on Ps. 33:4). Such abrupt transition is typically Hebraic.

In the heavens. The psalmist seems to soar suddenly upward, above the depravity of humanity, to the limitless spaces where dwell the attributes of God. Because the Hebrew preposition *be,* "in," may also mean "from," as shown by Ugaritic parallels (see pp. 618, 619; see on Ps. 18:13), this passage should probably be understood as stating that God's loving-kindness comes "from the heavens."

6. The great mountains. Literally, "the mountains of God."

Deep. Heb. *tehom*, the word used to designate the primeval ocean (see on Gen. 1:2). The psalmist is picturing God's judgments as inexhaustible and unfathomable.

Man and beast. From man, the crowning act of God's creation, to the wild beast. God cares for all the creatures of His hand (see Ps. 145:9). Note God's care for dumb animals as expressed in Ps. 104 (see also Jonah 4:11). The Christian should treat dumb animals kindly (see PP 443).

7. Excellent. Heb. *yaqar*, "precious," "costly."

Lovingkindness. Heb. *chesed*, translated "mercy" in v. 5. See Additional Note on this psalm.

Shadow of thy wings. See on Ps. 17:8; cf. Deut. 32:11, 12.

8. They shall be abundantly satisfied. Heb. *rawah*, literally, "to drink one's fill." God's provision for man satisfies, in that he finds in God what he needs, and finds that satisfaction in abundance (see Eph. 3:20; cf. Luke 6:38). God is the gracious Host (see on Ps. 23:5).

River. The figure was especially forceful to the dweller of Palestine, where water is often scarce.

Of thy pleasures. God's pleasures, not those falsely esteemed by man. Barnes finds the following teachings in this verse: (1) God is happy; (2) religion makes man happy; (3) this happiness is of the same nature as God's; (4) this happiness meets the need of the soul; (5) it leaves no soul need unsatisfied; and (6) this happiness is found especially connected with worship in God's house. Compare PP 413.

9. The fountain of life. Life literally and spiritually; life here and hereafter. God is the source not only of life but of all that gives life meaning (see Ps. 34:12; John 1:4; 4:10; 5:26; Ed 197, 198; see on Prov. 9:11).

In thy light. As God is the source of light, only in Him can we see light. Apart from God, all our understanding is only darkness. Our prayer should be: "What in me is dark, illumine" (Milton). See John 3:19, 20; 1 John 1:5–7; 1 Peter 2:9).

10. Continue. The psalmist requests that God's favor be perpetual.

Lovingkindness. Heb. *chesed*, the third time in this psalm (see on v. 7; cf. v. 5).

Know thee. God intends that a knowledge of Him shall lead to salvation (see John 17:3; see on Prov. 1:2).

11. Remove me. The psalmist prays that he may not be trampled by the proud sinner nor moved from the place in which God has established him.

12. There. The psalmist sees his prayer already answered, and draws our attention to the picture of the revelation of God's righteousness in the complete overthrow of the wicked. The psalm begins in depression and ends in triumph.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON PSALM 36

Chesed is a Hebrew word most difficult to translate adequately into English. The word occurs 245 times in the Hebrew OT. The KJV renders it variously as follows: "favour" 3 times, "good deed" once, "godliness" once, "goodness" 12 times, "kindness" 38 times, "lovingkindness" 30 times, "merciful kindness" twice, "mercy" 151 times, "pity" once, "kindly" 5 times, and "merciful" once. The LXX translates *chesed* by *eleos*,

"mercy," 135 times, and in other instances by *dikaiosune*, "righteousness," *eleemosune*, "pity" or "mercy," *elpis*, "hope," and *doxa*, "glory." Hence it is evident that the translators saw in *chesed* a wide range of qualities.

Chesed is used (1) to describe the relationship between individuals, and (2) the relationship between God and the human family. Of the former the following examples are cited: (1) between a son and his dying father (Gen. 47:29), (2) between husband and wife (Gen. 20:13), (3) between relatives (Ruth 2:20), (4) between guests (Gen. 19:19), between friends (1 Sam. 20:8), (6) between a king and his subjects (2 Sam. 3:8). Examples of *chesed* describing the relationship between God and man are many, the text under consideration being one example.

In a general sense it may be observed that *chesed* describes: (1) when applied to God, His attitudes, relationships, and dealings with respect to men, and (2) when applied to men, the attitudes, relationships, and dealings of men with respect to one another. There appears to be no one English word that conveys to the English reader precisely the same idea that *chesed* conveys to the Hebrew reader. "Mercy," "pity," and "kindness" correctly describe different aspects of meaning, but none covers the full breadth of meaning, at least when *chesed* describes an attribute of God.

With respect to *chesed* as an attribute of God, it is observable that the word "love," so prominently featured in the NT as a characteristic of (1 John 4:7, 8; etc.), appears only rarely in the OT (the Hebrew noun *'ahabah* is used of God only ten times, Deut. 7:8; 1 Kings 10:9; 2 Chron. 2:11; 9:8; Isa. 63:9; Jer. 31:3; Hosea 3:1; 9:15; 11:4; Zeph. 3:17; the verb is also rare, with two instances in the Pentateuch, Deut. 7:13; Deut. 23:5, and only sporadic occurrences elsewhere). We must not therefore conclude that this attribute of God was almost wholly unknown to OT saints and only seldom extolled. Rather, it appears that to a large degree what the NT writers described as *agape*, "love" (see on Matt. 5:43), the OT writers called *chesed*. Unfortunately the word "love" in the English language is used to cover the whole range of experiences from sensual infatuation and passion to God's tender and beneficent relationship to His people. Hence to many the translation "love" conveys only a partial or even an incorrect idea when used to describe the character of God. Nevertheless, for lack of a better word, "love" is retained in the NT as one translation of *agape* (in 26 instances the KJV translates *agape* by "charity"; the word was suitable in its day when it included more prominently the meaning of love in its perfection; at the present time "charity" is so largely associated with good will to the poor and needy that to use it as a translation of *agape* is misleading). However, if by "love" we understand divine love of a nature such as Bible writers have sought to convey to us, and if we divest "love" of those undesirable ideas that are sometimes associated with it in the English, but that are not resident in the Greek word *agape*, we have a fairly accurate definition of *chesed* insofar as *chesed* describes an attribute of God.

When *chesed* is applied to the relationship between individuals, the definition "love" is less appropriate. "Love" is generally regarded as an abstract term and as a principle governing the life. When "love" translates itself into concrete experience, its varied manifestations are often no longer called "love" but are given their own peculiar definitions (see 1 Cor. 13). On the other hand, *chesed* is used, not only for the abstract principle of love, but also for the varied manifestations of it. Thus Joseph requested the butler to show *chesed* to him (Gen. 40:14). "Kindness," a constituent of *chesed*, would here be a more suitable translation than "love." Rahab's deed of concealing the spies is described as an act of *chesed* (Joshua 2:12). As a reward for secret information the men of the house of Joseph offered to show *chesed* to the man from Bethel (Judges 1:24). The "good deeds" of Nehemiah for the house of God are called *chasadim* (the plural of *chesed*, Neh. 13:14). Job spoke of the necessity of showing *chesed* to one that is afflicted (Job 6:14).In antithetic parallelism the wise man set *chesed* over against cruelty (Prov. 11:17). Hence *chesed*, where used of human relationships, is usually best translated by the particular feature of the general principle of love that is being manifested. This rule is followed by the versions both ancient and modern. An example of human *chesed* describing a more general principle is Micah 6:8. Here the essentials of true religion are defined as consisting of upright actions, love, and humility.

The same rule may be followed when *chesed* describes acts of God that are manifestations of specific features of "love." For example, when the servant of Abraham prayed for *chesed*, he was thinking of a particular aspect of divine *chesed* needed to solve the problem at hand. Hence "kindness," or "favor," rather than "love," would seem to be an appropriate translation. On the other hand, when *chesed* is conceived of in its general aspects, the definition "love" is highly appropriate. When the psalmist said, "How excellent is thy lovingkindness [*chesed*] O God!" he meant, "How excellent is thy love, O God!" (Ps. 36:7, and by "his mercy [*chesed*] endureth for ever" (Ps. 136:1, 2, 3, etc.) he meant, "His love endureth forever."

The adjective *chasid*, from the same root as *chesed*, literally means, "one who exercises, *chesed*." It is translated "godly man" once, "good" once, "holy" 4 times, "Holy One" once, "merciful" 3 times, "saint" 19 times, "that is godly" twice, and once with the negative as "ungodly." In 22 instances the LXX renders *chasid* by *hosios*, "holy," or "pious." Since *chesed* is an outstanding attribute of God, he who is *chasid* is godlike, or "a saint." Viewed in this light *chasid* becomes closely parallel to the idea expressed in *agape*, "love," in the NT (1 Cor. 13; 1 John 2:5; 4:7, 8; 5:3). The adjective frequently occurs in its plural form *chasidim*.

In summary, we may adopt as a working principle the translation "love" for *chesed* when divine love is considered in its general aspects. When particular features are

highlighted or when human relationships are defined the context must guide in the determination of the proper translation.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 SR 109
4 EW 123
5–7MH 463
6 MB 80
7 MH 417
7–9MH 463
8, 9 PP 413
9 Ed 197; FE 415; MH 465; ML 12; 3T 433; 8T 322; 9T 41

PSALM 37

INTRODUCTION.—Of Ps. 37, Luther said: "Here is the patience of the saints." In it the psalmist is concerned with the problem of the apparent triumph of the wicked. The problem is solved in the psalmist's mind by his recognition of the transitoriness of seeming prosperity. He counsels us, from the maturity of age (see v. 25), to trust God, who will in His own time punish sinners and reward the righteous. The psalm is an expansion in acrostic form (see p. 625) of the teaching of its first verse. The acrostic structure is fairly regular, each Hebrew letter usually introducing two verses. In vs. 7, 20, 34, the letter introduces only a single verse: in v. 29 *ṣade* occurs instead of *'ayin*. However, some contend that *'ayin* has its regular place at the beginning of the last part of v. 28 introducing the sentence, "They are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off." However, the *'ayin* is preceded by the prefix *lamed*, which is not usual in acrostic psalms. In common with other acrostic psalms (see Ps. 25), there is not so much a development of thought in the psalm as an expansion of the central theme in various aspects. The teaching is made effective by the cumulative force of iteration. The theme of Ps. 37 is similar to that of Ps. 73 and to the message of the book of Job. Both have to do with the justice of God in His dealings with those who serve Him and with those who do not.

On the superscription see p. 616.

1. Fret not thyself. Literally, "do not heat thyself [in vexation]." Do not worry or chafe over the apparent triumph of the wicked (see Prov. 24:19). As Christians we should conquer fretting, for in fretting we lose perspective and clarity of vision. Moreover, when we are angry with the sinner, we are unable to help him, and also put ourselves in the wrong.

Neither be thou envious. See Prov. 3:31; 23:17; 24:1, 19; cf. Ps. 73:3. The psalm begins in the style of the Proverbs and continues so through much of its course.

2. Like the grass. A common figure of speech (see Ps. 90:5, 6; 103:15).

3. Trust. The best antidotes for fretting are trust in God and continual engagement in doing that which is of value to God and man.

Shalt thou dwell. Literally, "dwell thou," a command. God's command guarantees continuance in the land; there is no need to seek security in flight.

Thou shalt be fed. Literally, "feed thou," or "pasture thou," also in the imperative mood. Some prefer to translate the clause, "feed on faithfulness." This verse offers four rules to keep the mind calm when we are perplexed over the seeming prosperity of the

wicked: (*a*) trust in God, (*b*) keep busy doing good, (*c*) dwell calmly where God puts us, and (*d*) seek God's faithfulness.

4. Delight thyself. If we choose and love what God loves, we shall enjoy the desires (literally "petitions") of our hearts. On our identifying our thoughts and aims with God's plans for us, see DA 668.

5. Commit thy way. Literally, "roll thy way" (see on Ps. 22:8; cf. 1 Peter 5:7). The burden that is too heavy for us we may simply roll upon the Lord. David Livingstone is reported to have remarked that this verse sustained him at every turn of his course in life in Africa, as well as in England.

Trust. See on v. 3.

He shall bring it to pass. Heb. *'aśah*, simply, "he will perform," or, "he will act" (RSV). The matter in which He will act is set forth in v. 6.

6. Righteousness. If, when slandered, we trust in God, He will cause the clouds to dissipate so that our true character and motives may be as clear as the sun at high noon (see Jer. 51:10).

7. Rest. Literally, "be silent." If we could but keep still awhile we should hear in the stillness the voice of God speaking calmness to our souls.

Wait patiently. See on Ps. 25:3; 27:14.

Fret not. See on v. 1.

8. Cease from anger. The psalmist continues to give advice on the problem of our attitude toward evil men. Do not allow yourself to cherish feelings of anger against them or against God for permitting them to carry on for a while. With Him rests their ultimate end.

Fret not. A repetition of the key phrase (see on v. 1).

To do evil. The clause reads literally, "Fret not thyself, only to do evil." Anger and fretting lead to doing evil. Evil cherished in the heart is sin, and leads to overt sinning.

9. Wait. Compare v. 7. Verses 9–15 deal chiefly with the lot of the godless.

Shall inherit the earth. See vs. 3, 11, 22, 29, 34. This golden thread of comfort runs through the psalm. See also Ps. 25:13; Isa. 57:13; Matt. 5:5.

10. Shall not be. These words will have a unique fulfillment in the ultimate annihilation of evildoers and the extinction of sin from the universe (see DA 763; GC 544, 545).

11. Inherit the earth. See on vs. 3, 9.

Abundance of peace. This will be especially true when sin and sinners are no more.

12. Gnasheth. Compare Ps. 35:16.

13. The Lord shall laugh. See on Ps. 2:4. The psalmist is using the language of men.

His day. Compare 1 Sam. 26:10; Job 18:20; Jer. 50:27, 31.

14. The poor and needy. See on Ps. 9:18.

Of upright conversation. Literally, "the upright of way." A number of Hebrew manuscripts and the LXX have "the upright in heart." At the time the KJV was translated the word "conversation" meant man's whole manner of living (see Ps. 50:23; Gal. 1:13; Eph. 4:22; etc.).

15. Into their own heart. Evil is a boomerang—it comes back upon the evildoer (see Ps. 7:15, 16; 9:15; cf. Esther 7:10).

16. Better. See Prov. 15:16. Verses 16–34 deal chiefly with the ultimate lot of the godly.

Riches. Or, "abundance."

17. Arms. The proverblike verse is an example of simple antithetic parallelism (see p. 24).

18. Knoweth. See Ps. 1:6.

The days. Meaning what happens to the upright day by day (the figure of metonymy). See on Ps. 31:15.

20. As the fat of lambs. Heb. *kiqar karim*, the meaning of which is not clear. *Yaqar* is, literally, "preciousness." The idea of "fat" is derived from the observation that the precious parts of lambs are the fat parts. *Karim* may also be translated "pastures," as in Isa. 30:23. Hence many translate the phrase "as the excellency of the pastures," a not inappropriate symbol in a land where rich pasturage was consumed by the summer heat. Some suggest a slight change in vowel pointing, and a change from an *r* to a *d,* two letters easily confused in the Hebrew. This results in the translation, "like the burning of furnaces." The LXX has a very different reading, rendering the second part of the verse, "and the enemies of the Lord at the moment of their being honored and exalted have utterly vanished like smoke."

Into smoke. See Ps. 102:3.

21. Righteous sheweth mercy. Verses 21 and 22 are two couplets of antithetic parallelism (see p. 24) contrasting the character and condition of the wicked and the righteous. The wicked cannot pay their debts; the righteous have enough for charitable uses (see the promise of Deut. 15:6; Deut. 28:12, 44).

24. Though he fall. Perhaps primarily the psalmist is referring to stumbling into misfortune, disappointment, or calamity (see on Ps. 34:19). He may have had in mind also falling into sin. The righteous man is not without sin, but when he makes a mistake he takes immediate steps to rectify the error. "When we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, we shall have no relish for sin; for Christ will be working with us. We may make mistakes, but we will hate the sin that caused the sufferings of the Son of God" (EGW RH March 18, 1890; quoted in MYP 338).

Upholdeth him with his hand. Literally, "upholdeth his hand." God holds his hand, lest he be utterly prostrated when he falls (see Isa. 41:13; 43:2).

25. Now am old. The psalmist's own witness from a life of careful observation and experience. The verse indicates that the psalmist wrote the psalm in his latter years. He cannot mean that the righteous have no privations, but rather that they are not forsaken of God as they pass through times of suffering. Ultimately they prosper, for their descendants are provided for. The psalmist is uttering a general truth: true religion makes men industrious and independent and saves them from the necessity of begging for subsistence. For the opposite picture, see Job 15:20, 23.

26. Ever. Literally, "all the day."

Lendeth. Whereas the wicked man borrows (see on v. 21).

27. Depart from evil. This verse expresses the lesson of the psalm (see Ps. 34:14).

28. Judgment. At this point a verse beginning with *'ayin* does not appear; however, *'ayin* is the second letter in the clause translated, "they are preserved for ever" (see p. 722).

29. Inherit the land. See vs. 3, 9, 11, 22, 34.

For ever. Note the repetition of the idea (see vs. 27–29).

30. Speaketh. Heb. *hagah*, "to mutter," "to meditate" (see on Ps. 1:2, where the *hagah* is translated "meditate"; see on Ps. 35:28).

31. Law. Heb. *torah* (see on Prov. 3:1).

In his heart. See Deut. 6:6; Ps. 40:8. A new covenant experience (see Heb. 8:8–13).

33. Leave. Or, "abandon."

In his hand. A Hebrew idiom meaning, "in his power."

Condemn. When men falsely condemn a righteous man, God will acquit him (see 1 Cor. 4:3, 4).

34. Wait. Compare Ps. 27:14.

Thou shalt see it. Eventually vindication of right will come, and the saints will see the triumph of truth. The psalmist's statement need not be understood as expressing vindictiveness, but rather as forecasting the ultimate triumph of God's justice and love (see Mal. 4:3).

35. I have seen. A witness from personal observation (see v. 25).

A green bay tree. Heb. *'ezrach ra'anan*, the meaning of which is not clear. *'Ezrach* is, literally, "a native of a place," "a citizen possessing the full civil rights" (Ex. 12:49; Lev. 16:29 etc.). *Ra'anan* means "luxuriant," "full of leaves." Perhaps the LXX has preserved the correct rendering in its reading, "the cedars of Lebanon." Some suggest the meaning, "a tree that has never been transplanted."

36. He. The wicked man (see on v. 10; see also 8T 127).

37. End. Heb. *'acharith*, a word with a variety of meanings such as "the end to which somebody has come" (see Num. 23:10; Prov. 1:19; etc.), or, "the last," "the remainder," "the future" (Prov. 23:18; Jer. 29:11). The psalmist is thinking of the ultimate outcome of the righteous man, and that outcome is triumph, in contrast with the ultimate outcome of the wicked, as expressed in the next verse.

38. Together. Better, "altogether."

The end of the wicked. Or, "the future of the wicked" (see on v. 37). The contrast with the upright is complete.

39. Strength. Or, "place of refuge," "stronghold." Despite the apparent triumph of the wicked, God is a place of refuge to the righteous, and they who place their trust in Him will ultimately be delivered.

40. Because they trust. See on v. 3. In studying this psalm, it is well to bear in mind that this life is a school preparing us for the life hereafter, the prelude to the drama of life eternal. Ultimately it will be well with the righteous.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 1T 96
3 MB 163; MH 189; ML 168; SC 126; 6T 307
5 Ed 267; MYP 98; 2T 227; 3T 482
5, 6 Ed 257; MH 486
6 COL 175
7 PK 174; SC 75; 3T 327; 8T 130
10 DA 763; GC 544
10, 11 2T 448
11 MB 33; PP 170

18 PP 118
18, 19 Ed 141
19 DA 122; MB 163; 1T 173
21 MH 188
23 3T 466; 4T 522
25 MB 163
26 PP 118
29 AH 540; Ed 271; GC 674; PK 682; PP 65, 67; SR 430
31 1T 355
35, 36 8T 127
35–37TM 336
37 PP 237
38 GC 541
40 4T 163

PSALM 38

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 38 is a penitential prayer (see Ps. 6; see p. 624). The psalmist portrays intense suffering both in body and in mind. He describes his body as being tormented with pain and his mind with anguish, partly because of his sense of condemnation and partly because of fear of his enemies. The sufferings are intensified by the realization that those who should be his friends have deserted him when he is most in need of their understanding and solace. The psalm has three parts, each beginning with an appeal to God: vs. 1–8, the magnitude of his suffering; vs. 9–14, the sufferer's patience; vs. 15–22, a plea for help, lest the wicked should have reason for glorying in his calamity. The psalm is characterized by unusual verb forms, neat parallelisms, wordplays, and carefully balanced rhythms.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Rebuke me not. Compare Ps. 6:1.

2. Thine arrows. Symbols of God's punishment (see Ps. 7:13).

Presseth me sore. See Ps. 32:4.

3. Soundness. See Isa. 1:6. The symptoms portrayed here, coupled with the fact that the sick man's friends left him alone (see vs. 7, 11), convey the idea that the sickness was an extremely loathsome disease.

Rest. Heb. *shalom*, "peace," cessation from suffering.

Because of my sin. The psalmist feels that his suffering is punishment for his sin. All suffering is the result of the entrance of sin into the universe, and personal suffering is often the direct result of wrongdoing. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). God does not work a miracle to preserve men from suffering the consequences of violating nature's laws (see CD 29). If men were shielded from the disastrous results of their wrongdoing, sinners would become greatly emboldened in their iniquity.

However, not all suffering is the direct result of personal sin on the part of the sufferer. Many of the ancients regarded every affliction as the penalty of some wrongdoing either in the sufferer or in his parents (see John 9:2). Conversely they judged the degree of man's guilt by the amount of suffering. "Satan, the author of sin and all its results, had led men to look upon disease and death as proceeding from God,—as punishment arbitrarily inflicted on account of sin" (DA 471). Because of this

misconception they regarded the heavenly Father as a stern and exacting executor of justice.

Many Christians are under the same misapprehension. In spite of the lessons of the book of Job, and the lessons taught by Jesus (see Luke 13:16; Acts 10:38; cf. 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 12:7), these Christians look at God as the one who brings disease.

Here is the true philosophy of suffering: "Suffering is inflicted by Satan, and is overruled by God for purposes of mercy" (DA 471). The reason God does not always shield His children from disease and suffering is that if He did, Satan would bring the same charges against God as he did in the case of Job, that God was unfairly placing a hedge about His servant (Job 1:10). God must allow Satan the opportunity to afflict the righteous, so that all charges of unfairness will ultimately be shown to be groundless.

The sufferer may thus find comfort in the thought that though a "messenger of Satan" buffets him (see 2 Cor. 12:7), God is overruling for purposes of mercy and will cause the affliction to work for the good of the individual (see Rom. 8:28).

4. Mine iniquities. Emphasizing the meaning of v. 3.

Too heavy. The sudden change of figure from the idea of sin passing over the head, for example, like waves of the sea, to the idea of the unbearable burden of sin, may suggest confusion of thought as a result of the illness (see on vs. 8, 10).

5. Are corrupt. Literally, "fester," "putrefy."

6. I go mourning. Compare Job 1:20; 2:8; Ps. 35:14.

7. Loathsome disease. The symptoms seem to indicate a loathsome disease with an intense inflammation.

Soundness. See on v. 3.

8. I am feeble. Or, "I am benumbed."

I have roared. Compare Ps. 22:1. The voice gives utterance to the deeper anguish of the soul. With this verse the psalmist closes the major part of his discussion of the physical symptoms of his suffering.

9. Before thee. The psalmist recognizes that God knows his desire for forgiveness and healing, and that there is no need of repeating his prayer. He must rest his case with God. The faintest prayer is heard in heaven. We are not heard for our much speaking, but according to the intents of the heart and the completeness of our devotion. "True prayer engages the energies of the soul and affects the life" (4T 535).

This verse is the single ray of comfort in vs. 1–14. It is enough for the psalmist to realize that he can unburden his heart to a God who knows and cares.

10. My heart panteth. The complications of the disease include palpitation of the heart, weakness, and partial blindness. The sufferer is exhausted from the agony of his suffering, and is practically on the verge of death.

11. My lovers. Compare Ps. 31:11. They are unwilling to come near the sick man, probably from fear of contagion (see Job 19:13–20). Perhaps this estrangement was one of the arrows of v. 2.

Sore. Heb. *nega'*, "stroke," "plague," used of a calamity or judgment (see Gen. 12:17; Ex. 11:1).

Here the psalmist turns from the suffering that arises from his own state of body and mind to the suffering that is aggravated by the conduct of his friends who had deserted him and his enemies who were plotting against him.

13. A deaf man. The psalmist took no notice of the slander of his enemies, and remained silent under persecution.

15. In thee. The third direct appeal to God (see vs. 1, 9).

18. I will declare. A complete confession of sin. The psalmist withholds nothing. The suffering has been salutary (see on v. 3). The psalmist knows the satisfaction of true repentance.

19. But mine enemies. The psalmist is perplexed over the observation that the wicked continue to be prosperous and in good health.

20. Because. The underlying reason for the conduct of his enemies was that he was a good man, doing good. Sin cannot tolerate goodness. Total depravity abhors righteousness (see 1 John 3:12).

21. Forsake me not. See Ps. 22:11, 19.

22. My salvation. See Ps. 27:1. The closing words of the psalm show the salutary results of the psalmist's suffering. The trials caused the psalmist to cry out earnestly to God, in whom alone he recognized his hope of salvation.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 AA 45; PK 435

9 4T 535

PSALM 39

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 39 is a penitential elegy which Ewald called "the most beautiful of all elegies in the Psalter." It is the poignant expression of a soul at first unable to speak its grief. Incapable of repressing his emotions forever, the psalmist finally pours out his heart to God. There is in this psalm only one gleam of light, the profession of faith, "my hope is in thee" (v. 7). Like Job, the psalmist is concerned with the problem of suffering under the rule of a good God.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. I said. David resolved not to sin in speech (see James 3:2; cf. Job 2:10).

Bridle. Heb. *machsom*, "a muzzle," from the root *chasam*, translated "muzzle" in Deut. 25:4. Compare James 3:2–4.

Before me. The psalmist did not want his complaint to strengthen the wicked in their hostility to God (see Ps. 73:15). Evil men misuse and wrongly interpret our doubts.

2. Dumb. Compare Ps. 38:13.

Was stirred. Repressed feelings may be intensified (see Jer. 20:9). Expression gives relief.

3. Then spake I. Finally, the fire of his pent-up feelings burst into flame, and he broke the silence. Verses 4–13 are the expression of his feelings, to which vs. 1–3 are only the introduction.

4. End. The substance of the psalmist's troubled thoughts is expressed in the first clause of this verse. The psalmist wants to have a proper sense of the brevity and uncertainty of human life, that he may rest in the consciousness of God's care.

How frail I am. Compare Job 3.

5. As an handbreadth. Literally, "as handbreadths," meaning, obviously, a few.

The handbreadth was one of the smaller measures, being equal to 1/6 cu., or approximately 2.9 in. or 7.4 cm. (see Vol. I, p. 165).

Age. Heb. *cheled*, here the duration of life. Compare Ps. 90:4–6.

At his best state. Literally, "standing firm." Life is so short and we accomplish so little during our brief lives that it is natural for all of us at times to inquire why God made us so.

Selah. See p. 629.

6. Vain shew. Heb. *selem*, "an image," here a transient image.

Disquieted in vain. Man is restless, full of anxiety, active, but what does he accomplish (see James 4:13, 14)?

Heapeth up riches. The psalmist sees the phantoms called men spending most of their energy amassing wealth, at the same time recognizing that they have no control over their wealth after death (see Job 27:16–19; Eccl. 2:18, 21).

7. And now. There is a sudden turn from the consideration of the vanity of man's present life to the thought of God as the source of man's hope. This is the single gleam of light in the elegy.

8. From all my transgressions. The psalmist believes that forgiveness will bring deliverance from trouble, for he holds his trouble to be the result of transgression.

Foolish. Heb. *nabal*, frequently translated "fool" (2 Sam. 3:33; Ps. 14:1; 53:1; etc.). The psalmist is jealous for God's honor. He believes that if God does not deliver him, he will be ridiculed by the godless, who will rejoice in visible proof that God does not concern Himself with man.

9. Dumb. Compare v. 2.

Because thou didst it. The psalmist attempted to solve his problem by a blind submission to the will of God. Many attempt to solve the problem of suffering in the same way. They try to convince themselves that if God sends the punishment, it must be right and good. Like the psalmist, they do not understand the true philosophy of suffering (see on Ps. 38:3). Instead of recognizing Satan as the true author of disease and affliction, and God as the one who is working out the devices of the enemy for the good of the sufferer (see DA 471), they see disease and death as proceeding from God, as punishment arbitrarily inflicted on account of transgression.

10. Remove. It is proper to pray that the stroke of the enemy be removed (see 2 Cor. 12:8), but the petitioner should fully submit to the divine will (see Luke 22:42). God alone can judge the case in the light of all the issues involved in the great controversy. It is our part to remove any hindrances to what Heaven would like to accomplish for us, then to leave the results with God. If the stroke is not removed, we should say with Paul, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:9).

Stroke. Heb. *nega'* (see on Ps. 38:11).

11. With rebukes. See on Ps. 38:3.

Like a moth. See Isa. 51:8; Hosea 5:12.

Selah. See p. 629.

12. At my tears. Verses 12, 13 describe the psalmist's final plea.

Stranger. Compare Gen. 15:13; Ex. 2:22.

Sojourner. Heb. *toshab*, "one who settles for a time in a country, but is not a citizen of it" (see 1 Chron. 29:15).

As all my fathers. See Gen. 47:9; Heb. 11:13–15.

13. Spare me. Literally, "turn your gaze from me." Do not continue to afflict me. In contrast with the usual prayer for God to look toward him and help, the psalmist now prays that God may turn away from him what to the psalmist is His punishing glance.

Recover strength. Literally, "brighten up."

Be no more. Compare Ps. 6:5; Job 14:1–12. The psalm ends in a tone of deep sorrow, sustaining the almost unbroken unity of thought of the elegy (see v. 7).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 CS 18; MB 69; 2T 504
6 COL 258
11 FE 331

PSALM 40

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 40 is a combination of praise and petition. In it the psalmist gratefully recalls God's mercies in delivering from past trouble (vs. 1–10), and cries for new deliverance in the face of fresh calamity (vs. 11–17). The first division tells what God has done (vs. 1–5) and what return the psalmist has made (vs. 6–10). The second division appeals to God out of the depth of the psalmist's distress (vs. 11, 12), appeals to God against the power of his enemies (vs. 13–15), and, in conclusion, expresses the psalmist's confidence in God (vs. 16, 17). A portion of the psalm (vs. 6–8) is Messianic in nature (see Heb. 10:7–9). Verses 13–17 of this psalm also appear, with very slight changes, as Ps. 70 (which see).

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Waited patiently. The Hebrew here employs an idiom the force of which is to strengthen the idea of waiting. The psalmist persevered in prayer. We "let go of the arm of the Lord too soon" (see Ps. 27:14).

Inclined unto me. The following picture may be imagined: At first, God seemed not to pay any attention to the psalmist; then He bent forward and listened to his cry (see Ps. 31:2; DA 356). This is an exquisite figure representing the tender fatherliness of our God.

2. Horrible pit. Literally, "pit of noise." The psalmist probably had in mind a dark, deep cavern, in which the waters roar, filling it with horrible sounds, and from which there is no hope of deliverance. God's arm was long enough to reach down and deliver him.

Miry clay. Or, "mud." The bottom of the pit is not solid ground on which the psalmist, in his desolation, might stand, but slimy mud (see Ps. 69:2, 14, 15). Every attempt to extricate himself from the mire probably drove him only deeper.

Upon a rock. In contrast to miry clay. The psalmist has firm footing on solid ground (see Ps. 27:5), so that he walks securely (see Ps. 37:23).

3. A new song. God gave the psalmist new reasons for praising his heavenly Father. The idea is frequent in the psalms (Ps. 33:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9). The Christian who keeps close to God will daily find new reasons for praising Him (see Lam. 3:22, 23). The song of the redeemed will be a new song, a song of personal experience, a song of victory.

Our God. The psalmist includes his people in his praise (see John 20:17).

Shall trust. Many will see the deliverance that God has brought to the psalmist and learn also to trust in Him. Men accept Christ as their Saviour because they have seen what He has done for others. A saved soul is the best argument for Christianity (see MH 470; 9T 21). The singing of Paul and Silas in the night turned the prisoners' thoughts to God (Acts 16:25).

4. Blessed. See on Ps. 1:1.

Man. Heb. *geber*, "man in the vigor of life."

Respecteth not. Or, "does not turn toward."

5. Many. The recollection of the particular kindness that God had shown the psalmist became the inspiration of this psalm. God's blessings were so many that the psalmist was wholly unable to arrange them in order so that he could number them. Indeed, God's multitudinous blessings to mankind go beyond man's power to enumerate. Try as we will, it is impossible for us to "count" our many blessings. It is a good thing for us to attempt the calculation, but time would fail to complete the number, for even as we count, fresh blessings are being poured upon us. It is a false humility that keeps a man from telling others how God has helped him (cf. AA 124, 125).

6. Sacrifice. Heb. *zebach*, an offering involving blood.

Offering. The psalmist wonders how he can thank God for His wondrous works to him, and concludes that God requires of him a higher service than can be shown by all the offerings of the Temple service. This higher service is the subject of the following verses.

Hast thou opened. Heb. *karah*, "to hollow out," "to dig." The idea seems to be that God has digged out His servant's ears so that there is an unimpeded means of communication between God and His servant (see Isa. 35:5; 50:5). There is no allusion here to the custom of boring through the ear of a servant with an awl, to signify that he was his master's forever (in that case, only the outer rim of the external ear was pierced, see Ex. 21:6). The idea here is that of digging out, of unstopping, the internal passage of the ear. The ear is open to God's Word. Obedience is superior to mere sacrifice (see Ps. 51:16, 17).

Ps. 40:6–8 is quoted in Heb. 10:5–7. However, the reading of the LXX rather than the Hebrew is there found. Instead of the clause, "mine ears hast thou opened" (Ps. 40:6), Heb. 10:5 reads, "but a body hast thou prepared me." This is the reading of the Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Alexandrinus manuscripts of the LXX (see DA 23). The versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion on the other hand read "ears," as does the Hebrew.

Burnt offering. An offering totally consumed by fire (see on Lev. 1:3). Compare Isa. 1:11.

Sin offering. See Lev. 4:1–35 (see on Lev. 4:2).

7. Then said I. When his ear had been opened to understand God's message (applied in Heb. 10:7 to the Messiah).

Lo, I come. Applied to the Messiah, these words refer to His first advent. In the psalmist's day the volume (literally, "roll," that is, a scroll) represented the writings of Moses which predicted the coming of the Messiah (see Gen. 3:15; Deut. 18:15; Luke 24:27).

8. I delight. It was Christ's joy to obey His Father; His was a joyful obedience. When the law is inscribed in the heart, obedience becomes a pleasure. Instead of being regarded as a series of external regulations, perfunctorily to be followed, the law is seen as a transcript of the character of God. A true knowledge of God has led to an intelligent appreciation of the divine character, and has created a desire to copy that character. A sense of the infinite cost of salvation calls forth further appreciation, so that it becomes

the Christian's highest delight to live in harmony with the principles of heaven (see 1 John 5:3; see on Prov. 3:1).

Law. Heb. *torah* (see on Prov. 3:1).

Within my heart. Literally, "in the midst of my bowels." With Jesus, the keeping of God's law was a matter both of intellect and of feeling, of the mind and of the heart (see Deut. 4:29; 6:5).

Verses 6–8 point out one of the primary objectives of the teachings of the Messiah. To the Jews the externals were the sum total of religion. Jesus taught that these were only a means to an end and that the end itself was harmony with the will of God. The basic function of the plan of salvation is to restore in man the image of God (Ed 15), and any system of religion that subordinates this function to adherence to ceremony and tradition thereby obscures the primary purpose of true religion.

9. I have preached. Herein is illustrated the Christian's responsibility to preach the gospel to others also. That is not righteousness which is kept to oneself. In vs. 9, 10 five verbs are piled up to express the eagerness of the psalmist to show his gratitude to God: "I have preached," "I have not refrained," "I have not hid," "I have declared," "I have not concealed."

10. I have not hid. It is an un-Christlike religion that causes its possessor selfishly to horde up the benefits of his faith without sharing these benefits with others. "When the love of Christ is enshrined in the heart, like sweet fragrance it can not be hidden" (SC 82).

13. Be pleased. With vs. 13–17 compare Ps. 70 (see comments there). The expression "be pleased" is from the Heb. *rasah*, the root of the word translated "will" (literally, "that which is pleasing") in v. 8.

Make haste. See Ps. 22:19; 38:22.

14. Ashamed. See Ps. 35:4, 26.

15. Aha, aha. The language of contempt and reproach (see Ps. 35:21).

17. Thinketh upon. Heb. *chashab*, the root from which the word translated "thoughts" in v. 5 is derived.

Make no tarrying. Compare v. 13. The pensive close of this psalm has a delicately human touch. The psalmist's faith continues firm to the end. In sorrow we can know that God thinks of us and will send deliverance.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 ML 297
1–3MH 255
2 LS 320; MH 470; 2T 297; 4T 328
3 MB 127; ML 174; 7T 40; MYP 201
5 MYP 409
7 DA 23
7, 8 DA 410; ML 74; 4T 121; 6T 59
8 COL 60, 282, 312; DA 24, 176, 209, 329; GC 466; MB 161; PP 372; SC 66
10 3T 543
17 PP 351

PSALM 41

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 41 deals with a time of heavy sickness in the life of the psalmist. The suffering is made all the harder to bear by the psalmist's realization that those who formerly were friends are now traitors. The psalm begins with a blessing on those who lovingly help the needy, continues with a description of the treachery of his former friends, and closes with a prayer of hope for restoration. The psalm resembles Ps. 38.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Blessed. See on Ps. 1:1.

Considereth. Or, "gives attention to." He studies the most effective way to help. Here is no mere charity of giving. The verb implies a fundamental principle of social economics, involving the proper solution of such problems as those of poverty and disease.

The poor. Heb. *dal*, "the low," "the helpless," "the downcast," "the poor."

Time of trouble. Literally, "the day of evil."

2. The Lord will preserve. These promises should be understood in the light of God's original plan for the nation of Israel (see Deut. 28:1–14; cf. Ps. 1:3; 37:3, 4, 11, 23–26, 37).

Will. Heb. *nephesh* (see on Ps. 16:10; 27:12).

3. Strengthen him. As he has ministered to the needs of the sick, so he may expect, as a general principle, that God will enable him to bear sickness when it comes to him. Goodness is the reward of goodness.

Wilt make. Heb. *haphak*, "to turn," "to change." If the language is literal, it suggests the comfort given the sick man when his bed is changed. Nothing marks the experienced nurse better than her ability to make the bed of the sick without disturbing him. If the language is figurative, the psalmist is referring to relief from suffering, perhaps meaning that God will change the bed from one of suffering to one of convalescence. God does not promise always to heal, but He does promise relief and comfort (see 1 Cor. 10:13).

4. I said. The initial position of the pronoun "I" in the Hebrew makes it emphatic. The psalmist recalls what he said when he was sick. He pleads not his own merits, but God's mercy.

Soul. Heb. *nephesh*, simply, "me" (see on Ps. 16:10). No more than physical sickness need be inferred.

I have sinned. The psalmist regards sickness as the direct result of, and punishment for, his sin (see on Ps. 38:3).

5. His name perish. His enemies were gloating over the expectation of his early death and the prospect of an extinction of his memory.

6. If he come. Spoken of one of the enemies, who, if he calls on the sick man, speaks hypocritical words, gathers material for doing him wrong, and carries slanderous tales out of the sickroom. This is a graphic picture of one who poses as a friend, but is the worst of enemies.

Speaketh vanity. Or, "speaketh emptiness." His good wishes are hollow.

7. Whisper together. A continuation of the picture of v. 6. The hypocritical visitor joins the sick man's other enemies, and together they discuss the wretched condition of the poor sufferer and hope for the worst.

They devise my hurt. This is explained in v. 8. To what lengths will talebearing and hypocrisy go! In the book of Job the friends of Job actually came to the place where they accused Job of the grossest sins (see Job 22:5–10; etc.).

8. An evil disease. Literally, "a thing of Belial," or "a thing of worthlessness" (see on Judges 19:22; see also on Ps. 18:4). Probably moral evil is intended.

Lieth. The enemies convince themselves that there is no hope for him; therefore they may freely talk about him. The psalmist's suffering is all the more intensified because they regard it as proof that he is guilty of a shocking crime.

9. Mine own familiar friend. Literally, "the man of my peace." Those who hold that this psalm was written by David against a background of the rebellion of Absalom, apply this verse to Ahithophel (2 Sam. 15:31; see on Ps. 55:12).

Which did eat of my bread. The conduct suggested here is peculiarly ignominious (see 2 Sam. 9:10–13; 1 Kings 18:19). This passage is applied to Judas (see John 13:18). The fact that a portion of this psalm is shown to have another application besides the more apparently local application does not mean that the entire psalm was originally designed to be predictive. It is best always to interpret these ancient writings first in their historical background and to make an additional application to the future of only those portions that later inspired writers applied in such a way (see on Deut. 18:15).

Hath lifted up his heel. The figure suggests to some the picture of a horse kicking the man who feeds him, to others the idea of tripping someone. Such base ingratitude was shown by Judas, who had accepted three years of favor from the hand of Jesus.

10. Raise me up. From my bed of sickness, contrary to the hope of the enemies (see v. 8).

Requite them. For an explanation of the seeming spirit of vindictiveness see p. 624.

11. By this I know. Compare Ps. 20:6. In the same way that the psalmist misunderstood the true philosophy of suffering (see on v. 4; see also on Ps. 38:3), he falsely held that prosperity and health were special tokens of the favor of heaven. It is true that God bestows these blessings upon men (see James 1:17), but they are bestowed upon both the righteous and the wicked (Matt. 5:45) so that heaven's gifts cannot necessarily be taken as evidence of divine approval upon the recipient. A misapprehension of this fact explains certain statements made by the psalmist in Ps. 73.

We must never accept freedom from trial as evidence that all is right between us and God. Our only safe guide is the standard of the Word of God and the corroborating testimony of the Spirit (Rom. 8:16; Heb. 4:12).

12. And as for me. Literally, "And I." The sentence is unfinished, or rather, completed in another grammatical form. The psalmist begins in the first person, and then abruptly shifts his attention to God, who upholds him.

Integrity. Literally, "perfection," in the sense of completeness. The verse suggests that the psalmist is recovering from his illness.

For ever. This thought is in contrast with the hope of the enemies that he would soon die (v. 5).

13. Blessed be the Lord. A doxology marking the close of Book One (see p. 626). However, the doxology is also peculiarly pertinent following the observation of v. 2. Compare the close to the other sections of the psalms (Ps. 72:18, 19; 89:52; 106:48; 150).

Amen. Heb. *'amen*, "surely," a word of solemn affirmation, made doubly emphatic at this point by repetition. The repetition may also suggest the response of the people when the psalm was used in public worship.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 MH 201; 5T 150
1, 2 Ed 141
1–3MB 41; 6T 306

BOOK TWO

PSALM 42

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 42 is a pathetic lament of David, "a hunted fugitive, finding refuge in the rocks and caves of the wilderness" (Ed 164), exiled from the house of God, where he had found his joy in participating in the holy services. The form of the psalm is exquisite, consisting of two sections of similar length, each followed by the refrain found first in v. 5 and then in v. 11 (and a third time in Ps. 43:5).

Those who consider Ps. 42 and 43 a unit submit the following reasons: Several Hebrew manuscripts unite them as one psalm (the twice recurrent refrain of Ps. 42 occurring again at the close of Ps. 43); 43 is the only psalm in Book Two without superscription; the sentiments in Ps. 42:4 and 43:3 are similar. However, if "holy hill" (Ps. 43:3) refers to Jerusalem, then Ps. 43 could hardly have been written while David was a fugitive from Saul.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 627.

1. Hart. Heb. *'ayyal*, "male deer," probably to be written *'ayyalah*, "a female deer," to agree with the verb "panteth," which in the Hebrew is feminine.

Verses 1–6 constitute the first stanza of the elegy.

Panteth. Heb. *'arag*, "to long for." *'Arag* occurs only here and in Joel 1:20, where it is translated "cry," but where it should probably have the same meaning as here.

My soul. Or, "I" (see on Ps. 16:10).

2. Thirsteth. The figure is heightened by the observation that the lands in which David was a fugitive became intensely hot in the summertime and water was often scarce. Wild beasts frequently prevented the timid deer from approaching the few available water supplies.

The living God. The psalmist's intense need of God is emphasized in this psalm and the next by the carefully chosen appellations for God (see vs. 8, 9; 43:2, 4).

Appear before God. See Ex. 23:17 Ps. 84:7 for the use of this expression with reference to pilgrimages to the sanctuary. The idea of being in the presence of God is prominent in this psalm (see Ps. 43:5 Ex. 34:24; Deut. 16:16; 31:11). The sanctuary was regarded as a special place where men meet with God.

3. Tears. See Ps. 80:5.

Meat. Heb. *lechem*, "bread." "Meat" is an Old English term for food in general. It is of interest to note that where the psalmist speaks of tears as his food, the Ugaritic poet (see pp. 618, 619) speaks of drinking "tears like wine."

They … say. David's enemies taunt him with the bitterest of all taunts, implying that the God whom David trusted was not in the least concerned about his welfare.

4. These things. In his exile David remembers the occasions when he worshiped in the house of God with the congregation of those who were rejoicing in the presence of God. Such recollection made the sufferer's plight even harder to bear. "A sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things" (Tennyson). On the other hand, remembering God's providences may give the sufferer greater fortitude.

5. Why? Verse 5 constitutes the refrain of the poem (repeated with slight variations in v. 11; Ps. 43:5). In view of such pleasant recollections, David rebukes himself for being depressed.

Cast down. Literally, "bowed down."

Soul. The psalmist is addressing himself.

Disquieted. Heb. *hamah*, which has in it the idea of growling like an animal, roaring like the waves (see Ps. 46:3), or moaning like the wind.

Hope. See Ps. 25:3; 27:14; Lam. 3:24. We look for comfort in ourselves, when our only hope is in God.

Yet. In God's own time, all will be well if we continue to trust.

For the help of his countenance. Literally, "the salvations of His face" (see Ps. 13:1). God's salvations are manifold. It is said that when Luther was at the brink of despair, he would ask the question in this verse, and say to Melanchthon, "Come, Philipp, let us sing the 46th Psalm."

6. O my God. Verses 6–11 constitute the second stanza of the elegy. The poet resumes his expression of dejection, but in a somewhat more tranquil vein.

My soul is cast down. A frank acknowledgment of the depth of the psalmist's depression (see the refrain of vs. 5, 11; Ps. 43:5).

Will I remember thee. Even in exile David pledges to remember God. Herein is his strength.

Hermonites. Literally, "Hermons," perhaps designating the mountain range of which Mt. Hermon, with an elevation of 9,232 ft. (2,814 m.), is the principal peak. Some understand by "Hermonites" the inhabitants of Hermon.

The hill Mizar. Or, "Mt. Mizar," "Mizar" designating literally, "a trifle," "a few." The identity of the peak is not known. The hill was probably one of the lesser peaks of the Hermon range, whence rose the waters of the Jordan.

7. Deep calleth unto deep. The psalmist appears to be in that section of the land where the cataracts from the melting snows of Hermon echo and re-echo over hills and down ravines. These natural phenomena seem to represent the troubles that overwhelm him.

Waterspouts. LXX, *katarrakt*, from which our English word "cataract" is derived. The psalmist may be referring to the swift waters of the Jordan, especially in time of flood.

Waves. Probably a continuation of the image taken from the cascades and dashing torrents of the upper Jordan in time of flood. The breaking waves and rolling billows represent the psalmist's overwhelming sorrows of soul, especially in view of his exile from the house of God. David sinks down in momentary disappointment and discouragement, like a drowning man (see Ps. 88:7), but rises immediately in faith and confidence that God will do all things well.

8. Will command. In the midst of his near despondency, David sees a gleam of hope. God will command His love to become effective. As God controls the mighty torrents of nature, so He will control the waters of affliction and help His servant to survive them.

Lovingkindness. Heb. *chesed*, which may here be translated "divine love" (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

In the night his song. See Job 35:10; Ps. 32:7; 63:6; Acts 16:25.

9. I will say. In view of his hope in the Lord's goodness, the psalmist resolves to continue asking God to explain the reason for his suffering.

God my rock. Compare Ps. 18:2.

Why? Compare Ps. 22:1.

10. Sword. The meaning of the Hebrew word thus translated is not clear. It comes from a root meaning "to murder," "to kill." It occurs elsewhere only in Eze. 21:22, where it is translated "slaughter." The LXX renders the opening sentence of Ps. 42:10 "while my bones are crushed, my persecutors reproach me."

They say. See v. 3; cf. Joel 2:17; Micah 7:10.

11. Why art thou cast down? The second occurrence of the refrain. In this case minor changes of form appear, with the refrain augmented by the words "and my God." Note the change from "his countenance" (v. 5) to "my countenance, and my God" of this verse. In v. 5 David was addressing his soul; here he seems to claim God for his very own, with striking intimacy (see Ps. 43:5).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 COL 270; GW 257; 1T 159, 161; 4T 534 2, 4 4T 535

7 AA 572; 2T 97

11 Ed 164; MH 255; SC 69; 2T 319; 5T 315; 6T 480

PSALM 43

INTRODUCTION.—See Introduction to Ps. 42, and note the third appearance of the refrain inPs. 43:5. Ps. 43 is the only psalm in Book Two (see p. 626) without a superscription.

1. Plead. Heb. *rib*, "to contend," "to conduct a case against" (see on Ps. 35:1; cf. 1 Sam. 24:15).

An ungodly nation. The psalmist is probably referring to his own nation, which he knows to be far from God's ideal.

Unjust man. Perhaps to be understood collectively of the psalmist's enemies.

2. Why? The question of Ps. 42:9 is repeated in a stronger form. David is not only forgotten, he is cast off.

3. Thy light and thy truth. Mercy and faithfulness (see Ps. 4:6; 25:10; 26:3; 27:1 36:9; 1 John 1:5).

Thy holy hill. If the psalm was written after David's capture of Jerusalem (see Introduction to Ps. 42), the expression evidently refers to Mt. Zion. Prior to the erection of the Temple the ark was housed in a temporary dwelling in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 1:3, 4). The ancient tabernacle was at Gibeon (1 Chron. 16:39).

4. My exceeding joy. Literally, "the gladness of my joy."

Harp. Heb. *kinnor*, "lyre" (see on Ps. 33:2, 3; see p. 34). When joy is inexpressible in human speech, music gives expression far beyond the limitations of language.

5. Why art thou cast down? The refrain to Ps. 43, or the third appearance of the refrain to the entire elegy if Ps. 42 and 43 are considered one (see on Ps. 42:5, 11). In the Hebrew the refrain here is identical with the refrain of Ps. 42:11. A few Hebrew manuscripts and the LXX have all three refrains in practically identical form (see Ps. 42:11). In this refrain is the epitome of the human experience of the Christian: the problem of suffering, the assurance of help, the confidence of ultimate victory through faith (see 1 John 5:4).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 ML 321

5 6T 480

PSALM 44

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 44 is an earnest prayer to God to interpose and deliver His people from their enemies. The psalm has four sections: vs. 1–8, God's goodness to Israel in days of old; vs. 9–16, the present sad plight of Israel; vs. 17–22, the psalmist's contention that Israel has remained true to God; and vs. 23–26, the psalmist's appeal to God to deliver Israel. Compare Ps. 59 and 89.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 627.

1. Our fathers. The narrative of God's wonderful acts was passed from father to son (see Ex. 10:2; 12:26, 27; Deut. 6:20–25; 32:7). The phrase "in their days" goes back to the time of the entry into Canaan (see Ps. 44:3).

2. Heathen. Heb. *goyim*, "nations," here the nations of Canaan. Throughout this section the idea is emphasized that victory over the enemy was won, not by the strength of Israel, but by the intervention of God.

Them. That is, the children of Israel.

The people. That is, the nations of Canaan.

Cast them out. Rather, "set them free," that is, the children of Israel. The double parallelism may be illustrated by the following paraphrase:

Thou didst drive out the nations of Canaan with thy hand,
And plantedst the children of Israel;
Thou didst afflict the people of Canaan,
And set free the children of Israel.

3. Countenance. The word thus translated is rendered "presence" in Ex. 33:14, 15. God's presence was symbolized by the pillar of cloud (Ex. 13:21).

Hadst a favour unto them. Or, "delightedst in them."

5. Through thee. Victory is ascribed to God.

Push down. Heb. *nagach*, used of the pushing of horned cattle in Deut. 33:17.

8. Boast. Or, "praise." God is the only ground for praise. Compare Isa. 25:1–4.

Selah. See p. 629.

9. But. A sharp contrast between Israel's early victory under God's strong hand and the present sorry plight of the nation. The psalmist is using the nontechnical language of Bible writers who so often describe God as doing those things He does not prevent (see on 2 Chron. 18:18). There is a sense in which such a description is correct, but the language must be understood in the light of the over-all revelation of inspiration. Suffering and death entered this world as a result of sin, and the blame for their presence

must be laid at the door of Satan, not God. God sowed "good seed in his field," but "his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat" (Matt. 13:24, 25).

There is a sense in which God at times is more directly responsible for calamity. In a world in which evil exists it seems essential that sin bring penalty so that the evil propensities of the human heart may be curbed. Thus God has ordained civil penalty for individuals, and also that national crimes be visited upon a nation (see on 2 Chron. 22:8). The calamities of Israel belonged either in this category, in which case they were not undeserved, or in the general category of the afflictions with which the enemy harasses the human family. In such an event God should not be held responsible for them. The sufferer may not always be able to determine immediately the cause of his afflictions. While seeking an answer he should be careful not to charge God "foolishly" (Job 1:22).

Hast cast off. Compare Ps. 43:2.

11. Sheep appointed for meat. Literally, "sheep of food," that is, sheep destined to be slaughtered for food (see v. 22).

Heathen. Nations (see on v. 2).

12. For nought. Literally, "for not-riches." It was as though Israel had been given away, as worthless.

Dost not increase thy wealth. Or "didst not make a profit with their purchase price." Some prefer to translate, "demanding no high price for them" (RSV).

13. Reproach. Compare Ps. 39:8.

14. Byword. Heb. *mashal*, a word with a number of meanings, such as "parable," "proverb," "a prophetic figurative discourse," or "a song of derision" as here and in Deut. 28:37 and 1 1 Kings 9:7.

15. Confusion. Or, "insult."

Hath covered me. Compare Ps. 69:7.

16. For. Or, "because of."

By reason of. Literally, "because of the face of."

This verse closes the psalmist's description of the helpless state of the nation of Israel.

17. Not forgotten thee. The psalmist maintains that the reason for Israel's woes cannot be traced to defection from God; that even though the nation had remained loyal, it had been punished.

In thy covenant. It is difficult to understand how the psalmist could maintain that Israel had remained faithful, in the light of her continued defection. Perhaps he means that although individuals—even a majority of them—had broken the covenant, still, as a nation, she had not formally disavowed God. Or, perhaps in the intensity of his grief, he speaks hyperbolically, as is customary in the East.

19. Dragons. Heb. *tannim*, "jackals," not to be confused with *tannin*, "sea monster" (Gen. 1:21; Ps. 148:7), or "serpent" (Ex. 7:9, 10). "The place of jackals" signifies the wild, desolate place which such creatures frequent. The psalmist asserts that the Hebrew nation has been despoiled and made a fit place for wild beasts to dwell in (see Jer. 9:11; 10:22). This is a forceful hyperbole.

Shadow of death. See on Ps. 23:4; see also Job 3:5.

20. Stretched out our hands. Compare 1 Kings 8:22; 2 Chron. 6:12, 13.

21. He knoweth. If this were true, God would know. This is a solemn appeal to God's omniscience.

Of the heart. See Heb. 4:12.

22. For thy sake. The psalmist claims that the sufferings were not because the people had broken the covenant, but because they were God's people. Paul quotes this verse to describe the sufferings of Christians (see Rom. 8:36).

23. Awake. Compare Ps. 3:7; 7:6; 35:23; 78:65. It appears that God has utterly abandoned the nation of Israel. The psalmist now begins to plead with Him. A truer picture of God's watch care over Israel is found in Ps. 121.

24. Wherefore hidest thou? Compare Ps. 13:1.

25. Our soul. Or, "we" (see on Ps. 16:10). The verse indicates extreme affliction and prostration.

26. For thy mercies' sake. Or, "for the sake of thy love" (see on Ps. 36:7). Despite the near despair over the nation's ignominious plight, the psalmist holds fast to his belief in God's love. His trouble was his inability to understand God's ways. His strength lay in his assurance of God's unfailing love.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4–7 PP 716[10]

PSALM 45

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 45 is a marriage hymn, celebrating the marriage of a king to a princess. Some commentators incline to the view that the psalm is entirely Messianic. That portions of it are, there can be no doubt. Verses 6 and 7 are quoted in Heb. 1:8, 9 as the words God the Father addressed to the Son. Verse 2 has also been declared to be Messianic: "The divine beauty of the character of Christ, … of whom David, seeing Him in prophetic vision, said, 'Thou art fairer than the children of men'" (MB 79). This statement also sets forth the fact that David was the author of the psalm. Since Messianic prediction is so frequently blended with delineations of local nature, it is frequently impossible to define the boundaries between a future and a local application of a given passage. A safe course is to take as Messianic only such passages as inspiration positively declares to be of such a nature. Other passages, though they may appear to have Messianic application, must be interpreted primarily in their local setting and held only, if at all, to be conjecturally Messianic.

After an introduction of one verse the inspired poet addresses the bridegroom (vs. 2–9), and then the bride (vs. 10–17); the last two verses constitute a benediction upon the union.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 627, 628.

1. Is inditing. Heb. *rachash*, a word occurring only here in the OT. In post-Biblical Hebrew it means "to be actively astir." Such a definition fits the present context. David is so stirred by the wonder and the beauty of his vision (see MB 79) that he must give it expression. Soul-stirring preaching, like great poetry, comes from a soul that is stirred (see Matt. 12:34).

My tongue. David wishes his expression to be that of a rapid writer—warm, free, overflowing with emotion.

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[10]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 34:5). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Pen. Heb. *ʿeṭ*, "stylus," a writing instrument used for inscribing letters on stone (see Job 19:24).

This unusual formal introduction lends solemnity and importance to the theme of the poem.

2. Fairer. David describes his prophetic vision of Jesus, the effulgence of the Father's glory (MB 79). That the Jews attached Messianic importance to this verse is seen from an Aramaic paraphrase that reads, "Thy beauty, O King Messiah, is greater than that of the sons of men."

In vs. 2–9 the king is portrayed as a man, as a warrior, as a ruler, and finally as a bridegroom on the wedding day.

Grace. After mentioning the king's physical beauty, David calls attention to his graceful speech (see S. of Sol. 5:16; Isa. 50:4; Matt. 7:29; 13:54; Luke 2:47; Luke 4:22).

Therefore. Gifts of beauty and persuasive eloquence are regarded as proof of God's signal blessing.

3. Gird thy sword. Not only is the king beautiful and gracious of speech; he is also strong in battle. The poet predicts his victory as he goes forth to war. It has been suggested that the ceremony of knighthood is based on these words.

4. Meekness. The kingdom was to be established, not on pride and arrogance, but on humility, meekness, gentleness.

5. Thine arrows. This verse is a dramatic presentation of ideas, rather to be translated: "Thine arrows are sharp—the peoples fall under thee—[the arrows sink] into the heart of the king's enemies." The picture is that of complete victory.

6. Thy throne, O God. This phrase is variously rendered in the versions and in the margins of the versions. Typical among the translations are the following, "Thy throne is the throne of God," "Thy throne, given of God," "Thy throne is God's," "Your divine throne." These translations were apparently an attempt, by those who believed an earthly wedding to be highlighted, to give a translation to the phrase that would be in harmony with this concept. A correct understanding of the principles of OT prophetic interpretation (see Introduction to Ps. 45; see also on Deut. 18:15) permits an immediate and local application of the psalm as well as an application to the future of certain portions certified by inspiration to have such application. In the light of these considerations there is no need to depart from the simple and most natural translation of the Hebrew that is found in the KJV and the ancient versions. For a fuller discussion of the translation problems of this verse, see *Problems in Bible Translation,* pp. 148–150.

Verses 6 and 7 are quoted in Heb. 1:8, 9 to show that the Messiah is exalted above the angels (see Introduction to Ps. 45).

For ever and ever. There will be no end to Messiah's dominion (see Rev. 11:15).

A right sceptre. Literally, "a scepter of uprightness."

7. God, thy God. God the Father has anointed Christ the Son. It is possible to translate this phrase "O God, thy God," in which case the direct address to Christ the Son (as in v. 6) is continued, God the Father being considered His God.

Anointed. Heb. *mashach*, the root of the word "Messiah" (see on Ex. 29:7; Num. 3:3).

8. All thy garments. The clause reads literally, "myrrh and aloes and cassia, all thy garments." His garments are so saturated with perfumes that they seem to constitute his very clothing.

Myrrh. A fragrant exudation from a tree found in Arabia (see Gen. 43:11; Esther 2:12; S. of Sol. 4:6; Matt. 2:11; John 19:39).

Aloes. A fragrant substance produced by burning an aromatic wood from India and Ceylon (see Prov. 7:17; S. of Sol. 4:14). Not to be confused with the modern bitter medicine called aloes.

Cassia. A bark resembling cinnamon, but less aromatic, grown in India.

Ivory palaces. Palaces adorned with ivory, as the celebrated palace of Ahab in Samaria (see on 1 Kings 22:39; cf. Amos 3:15).

Whereby. Heb. *minni*, archaic of *min*, meaning "from," or "whence." A slight change to *minnim* yields the translation "stringed instruments" (see RSV; cf. Ps. 150:4). The ancient versions support the reading of the Hebrew text.

9. Kings' daughters. Since the marriage scene is laid in the opulence of the royal court, it is appropriate that the attendants should be the women of royal blood.

Thy right hand. The place of honor (see 1 Kings 2:19).

In gold of Ophir. In garments embroidered or ornamented with the choicest gold. For the location of Ophir, see on 1 Kings 9:28; cf. Job 28:16.

10. Hearken. The psalmist now addresses the bride, introduced in v. 9, counseling her to give careful thought to the new relation into which she is about to enter.

Forget. The bride is being admonished, in effect, "Do not pine for your own home, do not compare the new with the old, do not try to bring foreign ideas into your new environment; break all associations that would stand between you and your king; identify yourself fully with your husband." A beautiful example of fealty to another is found in the story of Ruth and Naomi (see Ruth 1:16–18).

11. Desire. Devotion to her husband will enhance her charms in his eyes. Sincere affection binds man and wife.

Lord. Sarah addressed Abraham as "my lord" (see on Gen. 18:12; cf. 1 Peter 3:6).

Worship. Heb. *shachah*, literally, "to bow down," an action performed before men as well as God (Gen. 27:29; 33:7; 1 Sam. 25:23; etc.).

12. Daughter of Tyre. Persons of wealth or rank will bring wedding gifts, considering it a privilege thus to honor the marriage. Compare the expression "daughter of Zion" (Isa. 1:8). At the time of the psalmist, Tyre was probably the most wealthy commercial city known to the Jews. On the wealth of Tyre, see Isa. 23:1–8; Eze. 26; 27.

13. The king's daughter. The bride, daughter of another king (see v. 9).

Within. Here referring, not to the glory and loveliness of heart, but to the bride as she appears attired for the wedding in her own dwelling before she goes forth to meet the bridegroom.

Of wrought gold. See on v. 9.

14. In raiment of needlework. Heb. *riqamoth*, now thought to refer to variegated material such as many-colored garments (see Judges 5:30; Eze. 16:10).

Virgins. Her bridal attendants.

15. With gladness. The bride's procession comes forth to meet the groom and to be conducted into the palace of the king. This verse concludes the address to the bride.

16. Thy children. The descendants of the king will occupy positions of prominence. The glory of the future kingdom will replace that of the earlier kingdom.

Verses 16 and 17 are a concluding benediction upon the royal marriage, addressed to the king.

17. Name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17.

To be remembered. The words of this verse may be understood to describe the praises due to God (see MH 101).

The people. Literally, "peoples."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 Ev 172
2 COL 336; CT 240; MB 79
17 MH 101

PSALM 46

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 46 has been designated Luther's Psalm, because the great Reformer, who was accustomed to singing it in time of trouble, paraphrased it in his hymn, "A Mighty Fortress," No. 261 in *The Church Hymnal.* The psalm is a glorious hymn on the theme that, in the midst of the upheavals of nations, God's people are safe. To express this theme, so pertinent also to the last days, the psalmist chose a form of verse unusually regular for Hebrew poetry. Three stanzas practically equal in length, with refrain and Selah appropriately placed, present pictures involving striking contrasts: roaring waters and rocking mountains, and a quiet river; nations in turmoil, and the earth melting at the voice of the Lord; the desolation of war, and God ruling quietly above the nations. After a notable victory in the days of Jehoshaphat, the Israelites sang this hymn (see PK 201–203). Ps.46, 47, 48 are closely related in thought and probably share the same background. That David was the author of Ps. 46 may be inferred from PK 203.

Oliver Cromwell, it is said, asked the people to sing this psalm, saying: "That is a rare psalm for a Christian. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. If pope and Spaniard and devil set themselves against us, yet in the name of the Lord we shall destroy them. The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." Ps. 46 was sung in Paris by the revolutionists of 1848; in India, by the hard-pressed British in the Sepoy rebellion. It may well be the hymn of God's people during the increasing perils of the last days. Compare Isaac Watts's hymn, "God Is the Refuge," No. 89 in *The Church Hymnal.*

On the superscription see pp. 617, 629.

1. Present help. The complete phrase reads literally, "a help in distresses has He been found exceedingly." Since God has always proved His help, He may be depended on in dire straits.

Verses 1–3 constitute the first stanza, which portrays the security of God's people even when the foundations of the earth are shaken.

2. Therefore. That is, in view of what David has said in v. 1.

The convulsions of nature, the earthquake that throws the mountains into the sea, the roaring of the waves, the cataclysm of the tidal wave—these phenomena as well as any commotions and revolutions in the political world need not shake the one who trusts in God. Whatever may happen, God is a proved refuge.

3. Selah. The word here marks the close of the first stanza. On the possible meaning of Selah see p. 629.

4. A river. A beautiful figure of God's protection. It represents a state of calm security in sharp contrast with the wild ocean of v. 3. The second stanza (vs. 4–7) depicts the peace of the city of God, while all that is outside her walls is in a state of uproar.

Streams. Probably picturing canals leading from the river to water gardens and dwellings. God's protection is dispensed freely through innumerable channels. A city well supplied with water is the picture the prophets presented of the Jerusalem that might have been (Eze. 47:1–5; Joel 3:18; Zech. 14:8). The New Jerusalem will have its stream of living water (Rev. 22:1).

The city of God. Jerusalem, where God was represented as having His place of abode (see Ps. 48:1).

Tabernacles. In David's day the ark, the symbol of God's presence, was housed in a temporary dwelling (2 Chron. 1:3, 4).

5. In the midst. God, as a help and protector, is represented as being in the midst of the city (see Isa. 12:6).

Shall not be moved. See Ps. 15:5; 16:8.

Right early. Literally, "at the turning of the morning," that is, at dawn, when the morning makes its appearance (see Ex. 14:24; Lam. 3:22, 23).

6. The heathen. Or, "the nations."

The earth melted. Forceful language, figuratively showing God's absolute power. The succession of short sentences, without conjunctions (the rhetorical figure of asyndeton), lends force to the vivid description.

7. The Lord of hosts. See on Ps. 24:10. Verse 7 is the refrain to the second stanza (see v. 11). The refrain sounds the keynote of the psalm.

Is with us. Compare Ps. 23:4.

Refuge. Or, "a secure height," "a retreat." The verb from which the Hebrew noun is derived is used in Ps. 20:1: "the name of the God of Jacob defend thee [set thee on an high place]."

Selah. See v. 3.

Comforted by this verse, John Wesley courageously met the approach of death. He quoted it the night before his decease, and was heard repeating its promise all through the night hours.

Our strength lies not in self, nor in alliance with worldly power, but in God. Calvin said: "That the faithful might learn that, without any aid from the world, the grace of God alone was sufficient for them. … Therefore, though the help of God may but trickle to us in slender streams, we should enjoy a deeper tranquillity than if all the power of the world were heaped up all at once for our help."

8. Come, behold. The third stanza (vs. 8–11) portrays God's power manifested in His domination over the mighty movements of nations, and the sublimity of His serene exaltation above them.

9. Maketh wars to cease. The Hebrew form denotes continued action.

Chariot. Heb. *'agaloth*, not the usual word for war chariots. It signifies rather "wagons," "transport wagons" (see Gen. 45:19; 46:5; 1 Sam. 6:7).

The verse presents a picture of a battlefield strewn with broken weapons and burned vehicles. The victory is complete.

10. Be still. Literally, "let be," "desist," "give up." God Himself speaks these sublime words. The first clause of this verse has been paraphrased: "Hush! Cease your tumult and

realize that I am God." We talk too much and listen too little. We lack Christian poise and steadiness, because of our ceaseless busyness. Moses spent 40 years in the land of Midian (Acts 7:29, 30), Paul 3 years in the desert (Gal. 1:17, 18; AA 125–128), and Jesus 40 days in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1, 2), in preparation for the responsibilities of the divine call.

Know. Men become acquainted with God by observing the acts of God.

I will be exalted. The theme of Ps. 47.

11. The Lord of hosts. Verse 11 is the refrain to the third stanza (see on v. 7).

Selah. See on v. 3.

Ps. 46 will bring special comfort to the people of God in the time of trouble (see GC 639). In that fearful hour, when a mighty earthquake such as never was will convulse the earth; when the sun, moon, and stars will be shaken out of their courses; when the mountains will shake like a reed, and ragged rocks be scattered on every side; when the sea will be lashed into fury and the whole surface of the earth be broken up; when mountain chains will sink and islands disappear (Matt. 24:29, 30; Luke 21:25, 26; GC 637; EW 34, 41), the saints will find protection in God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 AH 186; CH 286; EW 105; Ev 306; FE 248; LS 176, 249, 265; MH 268; ML 317; MYP 87; PK 203, 211, 340; SR 102, 127; 4T 616; 5T 34, 195, 215, 315; 7T 86, 126, 213

1, 2 Ed 165; LS 258

1–3 GC 639

2 9T 96

2, 3 TM 446

4 EW 39; 6T 366; 8T 27

4–7 Ed 165

7 ML 290; 4T 286

9–11 PK 203

10 DA 363; Ed 260; FE 441; MH 58; ML 149; LS 253; TM 282, 516; 1T 111; 8T 279

PSALM 47

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 47 is a festal anthem of purest praise to Jehovah, who is exalted as God not only of Israel but of all nations on the earth. It may be considered a development of the theme of Ps. 46:10. 46, 47, 48 are closely related. As an anthem for public worship Ps. 47 was probably sung antiphonally by two choruses, one singing vs. 1, 2, and 5, 6, alternating with the other singing vs. 3, 4, and 7, 8; both uniting in singing v. 9. This triumphant psalm is read in the modern synagogue service on the New Year, before the sounding of the *shophar* (ram's horn); on that day the universal rulership of Jehovah is emphasized in the ritual.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 627.

1. Voice of triumph. See 2 Sam. 6:15; 1 Chron. 15:28. Nothing short of such demonstrations as clapping and shouting appeared sufficient to the psalmist to express the praise that is due God (see Ps. 148, 149, 150).

2. The Lord. Heb. *Yahweh* (see Vol. I, pp. 171, 172).

Terrible. Or, "to be reverenced." God is worthy of profound reverence.

Over all the earth. See Ps. 46:10; Mal. 1:14.

4. The excellency of Jacob. Or, "the pride of Jacob," that is, the land of Canaan, a land of beauty and productivity.

Selah. See p. 629. The word stands at the point of division of thought: vs. 1–4 express the psalmist's hope; vs. 5–9 portray the accomplishment of that hope.

5. God is gone up. A picture of God returning to His dwelling place after having descended to accomplish one of His marvelous acts.

6. Sing praises. Heb. *zamar*, the root of *mizmor*, "a psalm" (see p. 627). Note the force of the fourfold repetition of the phrase.

7. King of all the earth. See v. 2; Ps. 46:10. This is the theme of the psalm.

With understanding. Heb. *maśkil*, a word of uncertain meaning (see p. 628). Since the term appears in the superscription of a number of the psalms (32, 42, 44, etc.), presumably as a technical designation of such psalms, the clause should probably be translated, "sing a maskil" (see RSV, "sing praises with a psalm").

9. Princes. Either the princes of Israel or of the people of other nations.

Even the people. The word "even" is supplied. The RV supplies "to be," and the RSV, "as," both readings supporting the idea that the people of other nations will unite themselves to the people of the God of Abraham. Converts to the Lord are regarded as the children of Abraham (see Gen. 17:4; Rom. 4:13–18; Gal. 3:7).

The ideas of vs. 8, 9 are expanded in Ps. 97 and 99.

Shields. Perhaps here a figure of the princes, as defenders (see Hosea 4:18, where the word for "rulers" is, literally, "shields"). The LXX reads "mighty" for "shields," evidently from a different Hebrew word. Those who rule are under the rule of Jehovah.

Since the Heb. *magen*, "shield," also means "entreaty," "petition" (see on Ps. 7:10), the passage should probably be rendered, "Toward God go the entreaties of the earth; he is greatly exalted."

Greatly exalted. See on Ps. 46:10. The theme of the psalm is repeated in its final clause.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

9 ML 291

PSALM 48

INTRODUCTION.—Like Ps. 46 and 47, Ps. 48 is a song of deliverance, intended probably for use in the worship of the Temple. It celebrates Jehovah's care of Jerusalem and the deliverance of His people from the hand of the enemy. Ps. 48 is one of David's (see PK 203) most joyous poems. It was sung by the armies of Jehoshaphat after a notable victory (see PK 201–203).

On the superscription see pp. 617, 627.

1. Great. David begins with a lofty ascription of praise to Jehovah, who has shown Himself a deliverer from great danger (vs. 4–8).

The city. Jerusalem (see Ps. 46:4; 48:8).

The mountain. Mt. Zion (see Ps. 2:6; 68:16; see on 48:2).

2. Situation. Rather, "height." Jerusalem's elevation above the surrounding country is perhaps the most striking feature of its topography. The city is on one of the highest ridges in the country. Its elevation probably made invaders afraid to attack it (see vs. 4, 5).

Joy of the whole earth. A poet's hyperbolic expression of his patriotic regard for the capital of his nation (see Ps. 50:2; Lam. 2:15).

Sides of the north. The exact meaning of this expression is not entirely clear, though the following explanation appears reasonable. Originally Mt. Zion referred only to the section of the city captured from the Jebusites (2 Chron 5:2; cf. 2 Sam. 5:7). Mt. Moriah lay to the north of Zion hill, and it was on this northern hill that the Temple and the palace of Solomon were later erected (2 Chron. 3:1; cf. 1 Kings 8:1). Geographically the two eminences of Zion and Moriah form a single ridge. After the building of the Temple the entire ridge became known as Zion (see Isa. 8:18; Joel 3:17). Because of the presence of the sanctuary and of the palace on the northern part of the ridge from the time of Solomon, the northern section became the most important district of the city. Hence by the expression "sides of the north" the psalmist may have figuratively attempted to represent the seat of civil and religious government and specifically the dwelling place of God, as the context of the psalm indicates. This interpretation sheds light also on Isa. 14:13, where Lucifer is represented as aspiring to sit "in the sides of the north." To sit in such a position meant to share in God's counsels and to enter into the divine purposes. This was precisely Lucifer's ambition (see PP 37).

Since David was the author of Ps. 48 (see Introduction to Ps. 48), any prominence he have gave to the northern eminence of Moriah was in prophetic anticipation, or else he composed the psalm after the detailed plans for the Temple, including the determination of the site, had been completed (2 Chron. 3:1).

City of the great King. See on Ps. 46:4. Jesus quotes this phrase as an appellative of Jerusalem (Matt. 5:35).

4. Were assembled. Verses 4–6 present a graphic description of the advance and sudden destruction of an enemy army. The language is highly compressed. The paucity of connectives in vs. 4 and 5 increases the force of the description (see on Ps. 46:6).

5. Hasted away. The enemy looked at the impregnable city, realized that they could not take it, saw that their own safety was in jeopardy, and fled precipitately.

6. In travail. This simile, denoting the severest of pain, is frequent in the OT (see Jer. 4:31; 6:24; Micah 4:9, 10).

7. Ships of Tarshish. A second comparison to show God's power as revealed in the confusion and dispersal of the enemy. Tarshish is usually identified with the classical Tartessus in southern Spain, north of Cadiz, though other places also may be meant. "Ships of Tarshish," formerly held to be ships able to sail to Tartessus, are now held to be "refinery ships" (see on 1 Kings 10:22). As a storm wrecked these vessels, so God swept the enemy aside.

8. As we have heard. Our fathers have told us of God's wonderful deliverances of the past. Now we have seen with our own eyes.

Lord of hosts. See on Ps. 24:10.

The city of our God. See on v. 1; cf. Ps. 46:4.

God will establish. Present deliverance is a pledge of future triumph.

For ever. Compare PK 46, 564; DA 577.

Selah. See p. 629.

9. We have thought. Literally, "we have compared."

Lovingkindness. Heb. *chesed*, "divine love" (see on Ps. 36:7).

Thy temple. See on Ps. 5:7. Frequenting the house of God tends to direct our thoughts to God.

10. Thy name. As God's name is known to the ends of the earth, so far should His praise extend.

11. Mount Zion. See on v. 2.

The daughters of Judah. Probably here used figuratively of the cities of Judah (see Joshua 15:45).

12. Go round about her. For the purpose of examining and admiring the city God had thus preserved from the enemy through a marvelous demonstration of His power.

Tell. Or, "count." "Tell" is still used in this sense in such phrases as "to tell money," "to tell ballots" (seePs. 22:17; 147:4).

13. Mark ye. Meaning, literally, "set your heart to," that is, "observe carefully."

Tell. Give an account, as evidence of God's right to universal sovereignty. David, justly proud of Jerusalem, traces all her glory to God, her Deliverer.

14. This God. The God who has taken up His abode in the city and has defended it against the enemy.

Unto death. God will be our guide all through life; He will accompany us to the very end. If the Christian has this assurance, he need have no fear. The Shepherd will lead His flock on into eternity (see Ps. 23:6).

There is some question as to whether the Hebrew phrase *'al–muth* is correctly rendered "unto death." The word may be a musical term (cf. Muth-labben, Ps. 9, superscription; see pp. 628, 651). The LXX reads, "forever."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 PP 539
2 DA 576; GC 17; PP 637, 731
10, 11, 14 PK 203
14 Ed 165; 3T 458; 8T 278

PSALM 49

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 49 contains an answer to the question, "Why do the rich appear to have the advantage in life?" The psalm teaches that wealth cannot postpone death, and that at death the rich are reduced to the same level as the poor. After an introduction of four verses, this didactic poem treats the transitoriness of man, with particular attention to the worldly rich (vs. 5–13); and then the consolation to be gained from the ultimate end of the righteous, which is eternal life, as contrasted with that of the wicked (vs. 14–20). Ps. 49 is recited in the modern orthodox Jewish home during the week of mourning following a death in the family.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 627.

1. All ye people. The problem to be discussed merits the attention of all mankind.

Verses 1–4 constitute an introductory exhortation, solemn and formal (see Deut. 32:1; Ps. 50:1; Isa. 1:2; Micah 1:2).

World. Heb. *cheled*, "duration of life." *Cheled* is also used to designate "the world" as composed of the passing generations of men (see Ps. 17:14).

2. Low and high. Literally, "sons of ordinary men [Heb. *'adam*] and sons of great men [Heb. *'ish*]" (see on Ps. 4:2; Ps. 8:4). The psalm teaches the humble not to envy or to fear the rich, and the rich not to trust in their riches or to use them unjustly to lord it over the poor. Thus the rich are warned and the poor consoled.

3. Wisdom. In the Hebrew the words for both "wisdom" and "understanding" are in the plural, calling attention to the varied aspects of these qualifications. See on Prov. 1:2 for definitions of "wisdom" and "understanding."

4. Parable. Heb. *mashal*, "similitude," "proverb," "song," or "poem" (see p. 945).

Dark saying. Or, "riddle," a point so obscure as to need untangling.

Harp. Better, "a lyre" (see p. 34). Sentiments worthy of retention are often best stored in the mind when set to music. "There are few means more effective for fixing His [God's] words in the memory than repeating them in song" (Ed 167).

5. Wherefore? The psalmist puts the consoling results of his meditation first, before he proceeds with the discussion. He has concluded that he has no reason to fear.

7. Can by any means redeem. A denial emphatically expressed in the Hebrew. No man by his wealth can rescue another from death, not even his own brother. No man can shift his responsibility or accept another's.

8. Redemption. Verse 8 is parenthetical.

Their soul. "They themselves" (see on Ps. 16:10). Ransom of an individual from death is the theme of the psalmist's discussion.

Precious. Or, "costly." It is beyond the power of wealth to save a man from death.

Ceaseth for ever. Wealth is insufficient, no matter how long it may be employed, to save one human being from the grave.

9. Corruption. See on Ps. 16:10.

10. He. The wealthy man (v. 6). Verse 10 states a self-evident natural law. Not even wisdom keeps its possessor from dying.

Brutish. Or, "stupid."

11. Their inward thought. The rich seem to forget that, sooner or later, men forget the name of the man who once owned their estates, and his memory passes into oblivion.

12. In honour. Or, "in splendor."

Abideth not. Verse 12 is the refrain of the psalm. It appears again with variation as v. 20.

Abideth. Heb. *lin*, "to spend the night," not remaining permanently. He will not even spend the "night" of life, but will soon pass away.

Perish. Literally, "are reduced to silence," or "are brought to rest."

13. Their posterity. Those who follow them are as foolish as their fathers.

Approve their sayings. Literally, "delight in their mouth." These foolish descendants also take pleasure in uttering the same foolish sentiments as their wealthy ancestors. The evil is perpetuated.

Selah. See p. 629.

14. Grave. Heb. *she'ol* (see on Prov. 15:11).

Shall feed on. Heb. *ra'ah*, "to feed a flock," "to perform the function of a shepherd." The idea is not that death shall eat them, but that death shall be their shepherd.

Beauty. The body crumbles to dust.

15. My soul. "Me" (see on Ps. 16:10).

From the power of the grave. Literally, "from the hand of *she'ol*" (see on Prov. 15:11), a vivid personification.

He shall receive me. Better, "He shall receive me for Himself." In this short clause, all the more powerful because of its brevity, is a suggestion of the doctrine of a future life and the resurrection from the dead (see PK 264). In Gen. 5:24 another form of the same verb describes the translation of Enoch (see 2 Kings 2:10).

Selah. See p. 629.

16. Be not thou afraid. The psalmist turns from encouraging himself to encouraging others.

Glory. This may be thought of as the sumptuousness that wealth provides.

17. Carry nothing away. See Job 1:21; Eccl. 5:15; Luke 12:20; 1 Tim. 6:7.

Glory. See on v. 16. The rich man's wealth cannot go down to the grave with him. Despite the custom of many peoples of burying wealth with the deceased, the body returns to the dust.

18. Blessed his soul. The picture is that of a rich man complimenting himself on his sagacity in amassing his fortune (see Deut. 29:19; Luke 12:19).

Men will praise thee. Many are ready to praise a man for accumulating that which is the universal desire among men. This general acclaim is no proof of ultimate success.

19. He shall go. That is, the unrighteous man, who is the subject of the psalm.

Shall never see light. The rich sinner and his progenitors will never again look upon the things that were to them the source of their pride and self-congratulation (see Job 33:30).

20. Like the beasts. The refrain of v. 12 is repeated, with slight alterations. Instead of "abideth not," this verse has "understandeth not," although a number of Hebrew manuscripts read "abideth not" here also. The LXX has "understands not" in both instances. In Hebrew there is a difference of only one letter between the two readings. According to v. 12, men in general are like beasts that perish; according to this verse, men perish like brutes only if they do not have the true wisdom.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

6–82T 198
7, 8 MH 210
15 PK 264
18 COL 258
20 COL 258; GW 18; 4T 526

PSALM 50

INTRODUCTION.—The well-known statement of Samuel to Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22), may be considered the theme of Ps. 50. The psalm is didactic in nature and of great contemporary value. Against a magnificent background description of a judgment, which may be applied to the last judgment (vs. 1–6; cf. GC 642), the psalm unfolds its message as a rebuke to the worshiper who follows religious ceremony but lacks sincerity of heart and purity of conduct. The body of the psalm has two parts: condemnation of the evils of mere formalism in worship (vs. 7–15), and condemnation of hypocrisy (vs. 16–21). A brief conclusion (vs. 22, 23) summarizes the message of the poem.

On the authorship of the psalm see DA 434.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 627.

1. The mighty God, even the Lord. Heb. *'El 'Elohim Yahweh*. A remarkable combination of the names for God (see Vol. I, pp. 170–173; cf. Joshua 22:22).

The earth. As a witness to the solemn proceedings, all peoples are summoned to attend the trial of Israel's iniquities.

From the rising. The phrases of this verse emphasize universality. All the world is summoned (see Ps. 113:3; Isa. 59:19). The scene here described will receive a unique fulfillment at the second coming of Christ (Matt. 24:30; GC 300, 642; PP 339).

Verses 1–6 constitute a sublime introduction to the psalm, of greater length than is generally found in Psalms.

2. Out of Zion. See on Ps. 48:2.

3. Shall come. That is, to judgment, in a primary sense to expostulate with the inhabitants of earth, as the body of the psalm indicates. In a unique sense the words are also a prediction of the judgment at the end of the world (see Matt. 25:31; Acts 17:31; 2 Tim. 4:1; see on v. 1).

Shall not keep silence. God will make a pronouncement on man's conduct.

A fire. The imagery may be drawn from God's manifestation on Mt. Sinai (see Ex. 19:16, 18).

5. Gather. At the second coming of Christ the angels will be charged with the task of gathering the redeemed (see Matt. 24:31).

My saints. Heb. *chasidim* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36). "Amid the tempest of divine judgment, the children of God will have no cause for fear" (PP 341).

Sacrifice. Heb. *zebach*, an offering of a slaughtered animal (Gen. 31:54; 46:1; Lev. 3:1; etc.). The ancient Sinaitic covenant was ratified by the sacrifice of oxen and the sprinkling of blood (Ex. 24:5–8; cf. Gen. 15:9–18). The new covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:18–23; PP 371). At the coming of Christ the saints who will be gathered are those who have accepted the covenant sealed by the sacrifice of Christ.

Since the English word "sacrifice" also includes the meaning of the surrender of some desirable thing, the words of Ps. 50:5 have at times been employed to encourage self-denial and the dedication of monetary gifts. But the psalmist is not here speaking of monetary gifts. If the text is used in making an appeal for gifts, it should be made plain that the language of the English translation is being accommodated to define an otherwise self-evident truth.

6. His righteousness. This text will receive an ultimate, unique fulfillment at the time of Christ's second coming, when "there appears against the sky a hand holding two tables of stone folded together. … That holy law, God's righteousness, … is now revealed to men as the rule of judgment" (GC 639).

God is judge himself. Man's judgment has often been wrong, as when criminals have been acquitted or holy martyrs adjudged the vilest of criminals. But in the last great day "God is judge himself" (see GC 650), and each may expect justice.

Selah. See p. 629.

7. Hear. God speaks directly to Israel. In this section the psalmist deals chiefly with man's duty to God and with the evils of mere formalism in religion (see Isa. 1:11–15).

Will testify. The Judge is also the plaintiff.

God, even thy God. The God who has protected His people has a right to declare the principles of true worship, upon which His government is established.

8. For thy sacrifices. The argument begins negatively. God does not charge Israel with neglect of the forms and ceremonies of religion. Their sin lay in their failure to recognize that the act was of no value unless its meaning was recognized and it was

performed in the spirit of thanksgiving and obedience (see 1 Sam. 15:22; Isa. 1:12–17; Micah 6:6–8). On the public and private offerings mentioned here and in the following verses, see Vol. I, pp. 698–710.

To have been. These words are supplied. The clause reads simply, "Your burnt offerings are continually before me."

9. Bullock. See Ex. 29:11, 36; Lev. 4:4.

10. Mine. Since all creatures belong to God, why should He need gifts from His human creatures?

12. If I were hungry. God did not institute the sacrificial system to provide sustenance for Himself in the flesh of bulls and the blood of goats.

The world is mine. See Ps. 24:1; 89:11.

14. Offer. Heb. *zebach*, "sacrifice" (see on v. 5). Not the mere sacrifice of animals, as the people commonly understood the term "sacrifice," was acceptable to God, but only the sacrifice that came from the heart that was full of gratitude and thanksgiving. The argument continues in a positive strain.

Vows. See Ps. 22:25; 116:14; cf. Lev. 7:16. Only lives full of penitence, love, gratitude, obedience, and devotion can be acceptable in the sight of God.

15. Call upon me. Petition, as well as praise, is a part of true religion. We should call upon God out of a sincere heart. The proper service of God is of a spiritual nature, from the heart (see John 4:24).

Deliver thee. See Ps. 46:1.

Glorify me. We cannot honor God in any better way than to confide in Him even when we do not understand His dealings with us.

16. Unto the wicked. God continues to speak, now turning His attention to the wicked. Verses 16–21 deal chiefly with man's duty to his fellow men.

Whereas vs. 7–15 deal with mere formalists in matters of religion, vs. 16–21 deal with hypocrites, those who teach the law to others and actually violate it in their own lives.

What hast thou to do? Compare Rom. 2:17–24.

Take my covenant. Their disobedience made them unfit even to frame the words of the covenant upon their lips (see on v. 5).

17. Instruction. Heb. *musar*, "discipline" (see on Prov. 1:2). Wicked men hate discipline.

Behind thee. The hypocrite showed how thoroughly he despised God's words by throwing them behind him.

18. When thou sawest. Whenever there was an opportunity to share in the results of theft, he was ready to participate.

20. Against thy brother. Falsehood and slander appear all the more heinous when the crime is committed against the closest of kin.

21. I kept silence. God bore with the folly of the wicked until it was time for Him to interpose in judgment.

As thyself. The hypocrite thought that God was like him, and would be satisfied with mere formalism in religion and external piety as a cloak for personal sin. But God regards principle, justice, sincerity, as prerequisite to spiritual worship. The sinner ever tends to conceive of God in terms of his own sinful purposes.

Set them in order. God now opens to the scrutiny of the sinner the nature and extent of his guilt before the judgment seat, prior to imposing the penalty.

22. Now consider this. Verses 22, 23 are the conclusion to the poem, repeating succinctly the lesson of vs. 7–21. God speaks, stating that He requires man's heart and mind as the only acceptable sacrifice. Here is warning for the wicked and encouragement for the godly.

Forget God. Though professedly engaged in God's worship.

None to deliver. There will come a time when even the Redeemer will cease to shield the sinner, and he will reap what he has sown (see Isa. 13:9; Zeph. 1:14–18; Rev. 6:15–17; 20:9; 5T 120).

23 Glorifieth me. See on v. 15. This part of the verse is addressed to the formalists of vs. 7–15. Heartfelt thanksgiving is a fundamental element in true religion. It is surprising how little importance we sometimes attach to the significance of the spirit and expression of gratitude in the life of the Christian. We tend to accept God's benefits as a matter of course.

Conversation. See on Ps. 37:14.

The salvation of God. To him who serves God with a sincere heart and thus conducts himself in accord with the divine will for him, God will reveal His salvation.

The psalm is timeless in its application. We may participate in all the ordinances of the church, be constant attendants at divine service, give freely to help the poor, engage in much missionary activity, and yet be reprobate if we fail to serve God in spirit, or if we cherish sin in our hearts.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–6Ed 181
2–4GC 300
3, 4 GC 642; PP 339
3–5 2T 198
5 CH 302, 558; EW 47, 57, 121
5, 6 PP 341
6 COL 179; GC 639, 650
10 CS 303; PP 525; TM 177; 1T 536; 2T 652; 3T 390, 549
10–12ChS 168; DA 434; TM 198
12 3T 390
14, 15 DA 129
15 COL 172; PK 631; TM 380; 5T 195
16–191T 338
21 Ed 144; MB 43
23 COL 298; ML 33, 91, 153; PP 289; SC 109; 5T 319; 6T 62

PSALM 51

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 51 is a penitential psalm (see p. 624). It was composed by David "after his great sin [with Bath-sheba], in the anguish of remorse and self-abhorrence" (Ed 165). It is an expression of his "repentance, when the message of reproof came to him from God," intended "to be sung in the public assemblies of his people, … that others might be instructed by the sad history of his fall" (PP 724, 725). It is a prayer for forgiveness and for sanctification through the Holy Spirit. Accompanying the petition are vows of gratitude for God's mercy and promises for the future. Perhaps no other OT

passage draws so clear a picture of the truly repentant sinner trusting in God's power to forgive and restore, as this portrait of David's experience of transgression. The psalm should be studied in the light of 2 Sam. 12:1–13 and Ps. 32.

Ps. 51 was a favorite of John Bunyan. Just before her execution (1554), Lady Jane Grey recited the words of this psalm in English, on her knees on the scaffold.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Have mercy. Heartbroken from a consciousness of his great sin against Uriah and Bath-sheba, crushed under the weight of guilt, David cries to God for mercy. There is in this cry no excuse, no apology, no attempt to vindicate, no complaint against the justice of the law that condemned him. In true humility David blames no one but himself.

Lovingkindness. See Additional Note on Ps. 36. When we have no sense of sin, we talk of justice; when we sense the need of a Saviour, we talk of love.

Multitude. In the vastness of God's mercy David could safely trust.

Blot out. Erase from the book in which the record of man's actions is kept (see Ex. 32:32, 33; Isa. 43:25; 44:22; Acts 3:19).

2. Wash me throughly. Literally, "multiply to wash me" (see Jer. 4:14; Zech. 13:1). The Hebrew word is used of washing a garment (Gen. 49:11; Ex. 19:10). "Throughly" is an archaic form of "thoroughly" (see Jer. 6:9; 7:5; etc.).

Iniquity. See on Ps. 32:1, 2 for the several words for sin used in this and the following verses. The various aspects of sin are covered.

4. Against thee, thee only. David did not mean to imply that he had not wronged Uriah and Bath-sheba, but all sin, in its ultimate nature, is sin against God. When convicted by Nathan, David declared, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Sam. 12:13). Joseph also acknowledged that, should he yield to temptation, his sin would be against God, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9).

Evil in thy sight. Compare 2 Sam. 11:27; 12:9.

Mightest be justified. When God condemns, He is clear from any charge of injustice (see Rom. 3:4).

5. I was shapen in iniquity. David recognized that children inherit natures with propensities to evil (see Job 14:4; Ps. 58:3; PP 61, 306; MH 372, 373; GC 533). He did not seek to excuse his sin, but sought to stress the still greater need of God's mercy because of his inborn tendency to do evil (see PP 64).

6. In the inward parts. Compare Ps. 15:2.

Hidden part. David craves the wisdom that will guide him in a pure way.

7. Purge. Heb. *chata'*, the simple form of which means "to sin," in the sense of missing the mark. The form employed here means, "to make atonement."

Hyssop. Under the Levitical law, hyssop was used in ceremonies of cleansing (see on Ex. 12:22; cf. Lev. 14:4; Num. 19:18). David recognized that only the remedy with the greatest purifying power could cleanse him from his defilement.

Wash me. See v. 2; cf. Isa. 1:16, 18. David understood the spiritual significance of the ceremonial law.

The Christian should make this prayer of David's his own in times when sin has made him miss the mark (see COL 206; PK 320).

8. To hear joy. David longed for the sweet voice of God's forgiveness (see on Ps. 32:1, 2). This was his supreme desire.

Bones. Compare Ps. 6:2.

9. Hide thy face. Compare Ps. 13:1. David renews his prayer for forgiveness, with most earnest pleading and with tears.

Blot out. See on v. 1.

10. Create. Heb. *bara'* (see on Gen. 1:1). God does not merely cleanse the heart; He creates in His forgiven child a new heart (see Eze. 36:26). "The words, 'A new heart also will I give you,' mean, 'A new mind will I give you.' A change of heart is always attended by a clear conviction of Christian duty" (EGW RH Dec. 18, 1913). The prayer for forgiveness should always be accompanied by the prayer for heart renewal and sanctification (see Jer. 24:7; 11:19; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 2:10; 4:24).

A right spirit. Or, "a constant spirit." David's prayer is for a spirit that is steadfast in its faith, and therefore constant in its obedience. The psalmist desires an entirely new mental and moral nature. "David had the true conception of forgiveness" when he prayed this prayer (MB 167). This should be the petition of every soul (PP 460).

11. Cast me not away. True happiness is found only in the presence of God (see Ps. 13:1; 16:11; 30:7; cf. Gen. 4:14).

Thy holy spirit. Although he realized that his sins had grieved the Holy Spirit, David prays that he might not be deprived of the guidance of that Spirit (see Isa. 63:10). Compare Eph. 4:30.

12. Restore. David desires a return of that joy he had experienced before his great sin.

With thy free spirit. The words translated "with thy" are supplied. "Free spirit" is better translated, "willing spirit." David prays to be kept in a frame of mind willing and ready to obey God and to serve Him.

13. Then will I teach. David turns from petition to promise. He promises to instruct others concerning the malignancy of sin, that they may turn from their evil ways and find mercy and forgiveness.

Thy ways. See Ps. 18:21.

Shall be converted. From David's example, men will learn that God grants mercy to those who forsake their sins, no matter how deep they may have fallen. Michelangelo placed this text as a motto on his portrait of Savonarola.

14. Bloodguiltiness. Apparently specific reference to the murder of Uriah (see 2 Sam. 11:14–17). David pleads that the sentence may not fall upon him.

God of my salvation. See Ps. 18:46; 25:5; 27:9. David recognizes that salvation may be found only in God.

15. Open thou my lips. Forgiveness of sin and the relief of conscience unstop the lips of sinners and cause praise to flow forth abundantly (see Ps. 40:3).

16. Desirest not sacrifice. See on Ps. 40:6–8; cf. Isa. 1:11–17. The law of Moses prescribed death as the punishment for murder (Ex. 21:12); no mere offering could suffice.

17. Sacrifices of God. That is, the sacrifices that God approves.

A broken spirit. Joy in forgiveness does not preclude sorrow and contrition for sin (see PK 78).

18. Unto Zion. David prays that God's displeasure may not rest upon Zion (see on Ps. 48:2), the city of his heart, because of his sin. It is a characteristic of the psalmist to include his people in his prayer (see Ps. 25:22; 28:9). David probably added vs. 18, 19 to make this intensely personal penitential prayer suitable for public worship (see PP 725).

Build thou the walls. David prayed that nothing might interfere with the continued development of the fortifications of the sacred city (see 2 Sam. 5:9; 1 Kings 3:1; 9:15, 16). Figuratively, the phrase may refer to God's favor and blessing.

19. Of righteousness. As opposed to the sacrifice discussed in v. 16, sacrifices acceptable to God are sacrifices of righteousness (see Ps. 4:5), offered in a right spirit with a right motive.

With burnt offering. External forms of religion have their place. It was Christ who instituted the ceremonial law (see PP 366, 367). The various services prescribed in this law had important instructional value. The sin of the people lay in making these outward forms the sum total of religion. David recognized the significance and value of the forms of public worship when they are outward signs of the sincere spirit of the worshiper. We should take care that the most formal parts of public worship preserve the spirit of humble worship. There is nothing wrong in following certain forms of worship, but rather in a lack of sincere religion motivating the forms.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

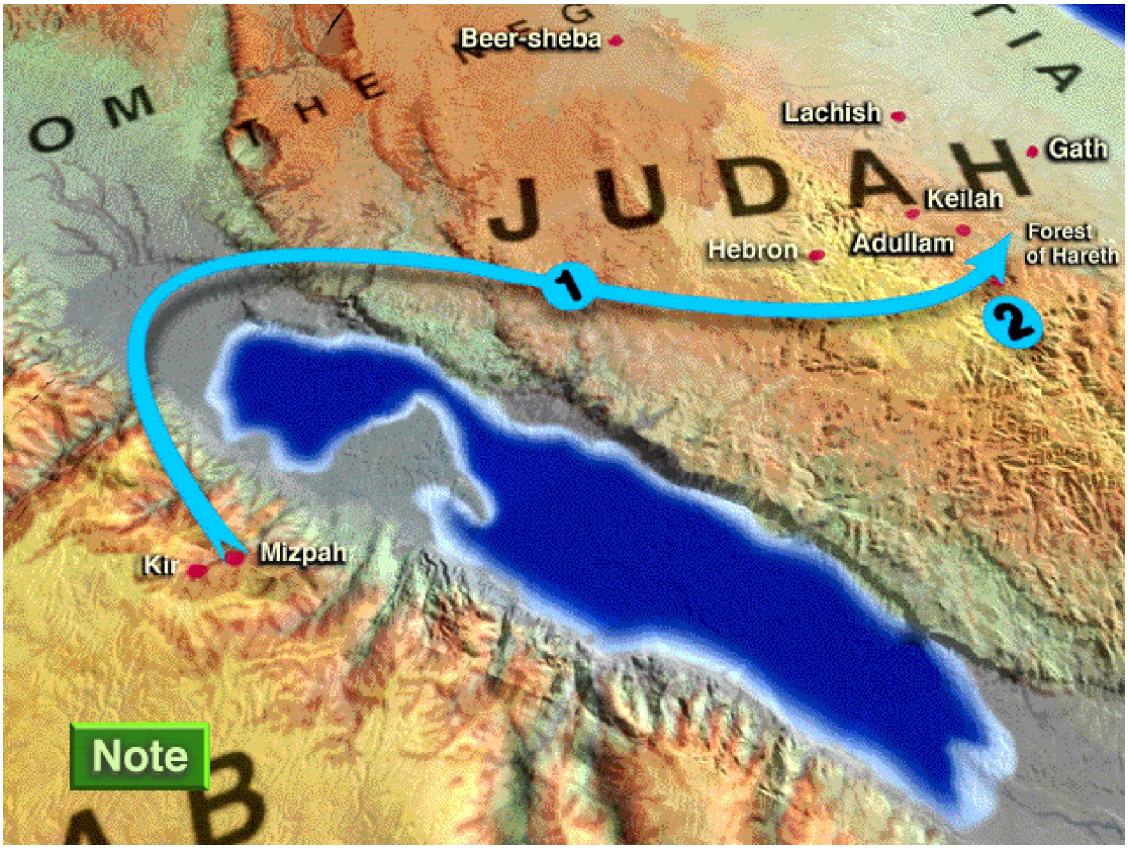
1 5T 343, 639
1–7Ed 165; PP 724
1–14SC 28
4 5T 639
6 1T 163; 2T 335
7 COL 206; PK 320; PP 277; TM 95; 4T 122
8–14PP 725
10 CG 418; DA 174; MB 167; ML 85; PP 460; SC 39; TM 328; 1T 158; 4T 122; 9T 23
10–13TM 95
12 4T 122; 8T 103
12, 13 6T 43
13 EW 120
16, 17 PP 725
17 COL 297; CS 153; DA 280; Ev 510; FE 370; GC 484; PK 436; SC 30; 1T 205, 537; 2T 147, 303; 5T 339 (see under Ps. 34:18; Isa. 57:15)

PSALM 52

The Righteous Versus the Wicked

[11]

[11]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 45:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



When, under severe depression of spirit, flight seems the only way out, and it becomes necessary to forsake those who should know God but who have proved unfaithful to their trust, God remains constant in His interest and counsel. Those who feel that all good intentions have only provided more capital for the enemy should, as David did, recognize the steadfast love and almighty protective power of God. Regardless of the attitude of others, we should determine anew to proclaim the divine name. Psalm 52:1-4, 8, 9
[12]

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 52 denounces the unscrupulous talebearer, or mischief-maker, who trusts in his wealth rather than in righteousness. The psalmist is firm in the knowledge that such a one shall be plucked up, but that the righteous may rest secure under the protection of God. The superscription notes the historical background of the psalm. Doeg, a leading man in Saul's household, played the role of informer, revealing to Saul David's visit to Ahimelech, the priest (see 1 Sam. 21:1–9). In the massacre that followed, Doeg took the lead (see 1 Sam. 22:11–19).

On the superscription see pp. 616, 628.

1. Why boastest thou? Verse 1 states the theme of the psalm: man's sinful scheming is futile, for God's goodness is constantly displayed in the protection of His children.

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[12]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Goodness. Heb. *chesed*, "divine love" (see Additional Note on Ps. 36). God's goodness and mercy are constant.

God. Heb. *'El*, a title thought to designate God as a powerful one (see Vol. I, p. 171). God's majesty is contrasted with the littleness of the mischief-maker.

Continually. Literally, "all the day."

2. Mischiefs. Verses 2–4 describe the talebearer. Doeg's misleading report brought about the massacre of the priests (see 1 Sam. 22:9, 10, 18). Condemnation of the evil tongue is a common topic in Psalms (see Ps. 12:3; 55:9; 78:36; 109:2).

3. Selah. The occurrence of this term within a compressed thought (as also in v. 5) seems to indicate that it has no relation here to thought division (see p. 629).

5. Destroy thee. The reference is to the talebearer. The idea of complete destruction is emphasized by three additional verbal phrases: "shall take thee away," "pluck thee out," "root thee out."

Dwelling place. Literally, "tent."

Root thee out. As a tree is torn up from the roots and left to perish, in sharp contrast with the state of the righteous depicted in vs. 8, 9.

6. Shall see. See Ps. 37:34.

Shall laugh. See on Ps. 2:4; cf. Rev. 18:20; 19:1–3.

7. Man. Heb. *geber*, "strong man"; employed here to heighten the contrast with his fall.

His strength. Doeg's fault sprang from his lack of dependence on God.

Riches. Doubtless Saul rewarded Doeg for his unscrupulous activity in dealing deceitfully with David (see PP 659). Doeg may have been wealthy in his own right, and therefore prone to depend upon his wealth rather than upon God.

8. Green olive tree. Unlike the tyrant (see v. 5), David flourishes like a live tree, and bears fruit (see on Ps. 1:3; 92:12–14).

I trust. Unlike Doeg, who trusted in his riches, David made God his confidence.

Mercy of God. Apparently an allusion to the second half of v. 1.

9. Thou hast done it. David expresses his faith that his prayer has been answered (see Ps. 54:7): he has been delivered from Doeg's treachery.

Wait on thy name. See Ps. 25:3, 5; 27:14. David expresses absolute trust in God and dependence on Him.

Saints. Heb. *chasidim* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36). For the great mercy shown him in this affair, David vows to offer public praise (see Ps. 22:25; 35:18). The testimony meeting has a place of real value among God's "saints" of the last days.

PSALM 53

Divine Deliverances Through Prayer

[13]

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 52 denounces the unscrupulous talebearer, or mischief-maker, who trusts in his wealth rather than in righteousness. The psalmist is firm in the

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[13]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 52:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

knowledge that such a one shall be plucked up, but that the righteous may rest secure under the protection of God. The superscription notes the historical background of the psalm. Doeg, a leading man in Saul's household, played the role of informer, revealing to Saul David's visit to Ahimelech, the priest (see 1 Sam. 21:1–9). In the massacre that followed, Doeg took the lead (see 1 Sam. 22:11–19).

On the superscription see pp. 616, 628.

1. Why boastest thou? Verse 1 states the theme of the psalm: man's sinful scheming is futile, for God's goodness is constantly displayed in the protection of His children.

Goodness. Heb. *chesed*, "divine love" (see Additional Note on Ps. 36). God's goodness and mercy are constant.

God. Heb. *'El*, a title thought to designate God as a powerful one (see Vol. I, p. 171). God's majesty is contrasted with the littleness of the mischief-maker.

Continually. Literally, "all the day."

2. Mischiefs. Verses 2–4 describe the talebearer. Doeg's misleading report brought about the massacre of the priests (see 1 Sam. 22:9, 10, 18). Condemnation of the evil tongue is a common topic in Psalms (see Ps. 12:3; 55:9; 78:36; 109:2).

3. Selah. The occurrence of this term within a compressed thought (as also in v. 5) seems to indicate that it has no relation here to thought division (see p. 629).

5. Destroy thee. The reference is to the talebearer. The idea of complete destruction is emphasized by three additional verbal phrases: "shall take thee away," "pluck thee out," "root thee out."

Dwelling place. Literally, "tent."

Root thee out. As a tree is torn up from the roots and left to perish, in sharp contrast with the state of the righteous depicted in vs. 8, 9.

6. Shall see. See Ps. 37:34.

Shall laugh. See on Ps. 2:4; cf. Rev. 18:20; 19:1–3.

7. Man. Heb. *geber*, "strong man"; employed here to heighten the contrast with his fall.

His strength. Doeg's fault sprang from his lack of dependence on God.

Riches. Doubtless Saul rewarded Doeg for his unscrupulous activity in dealing deceitfully with David (see PP 659). Doeg may have been wealthy in his own right, and therefore prone to depend upon his wealth rather than upon God.

8. Green olive tree. Unlike the tyrant (see v. 5), David flourishes like a live tree, and bears fruit (see on Ps. 1:3; 92:12–14).

I trust. Unlike Doeg, who trusted in his riches, David made God his confidence.

Mercy of God. Apparently an allusion to the second half of v. 1.

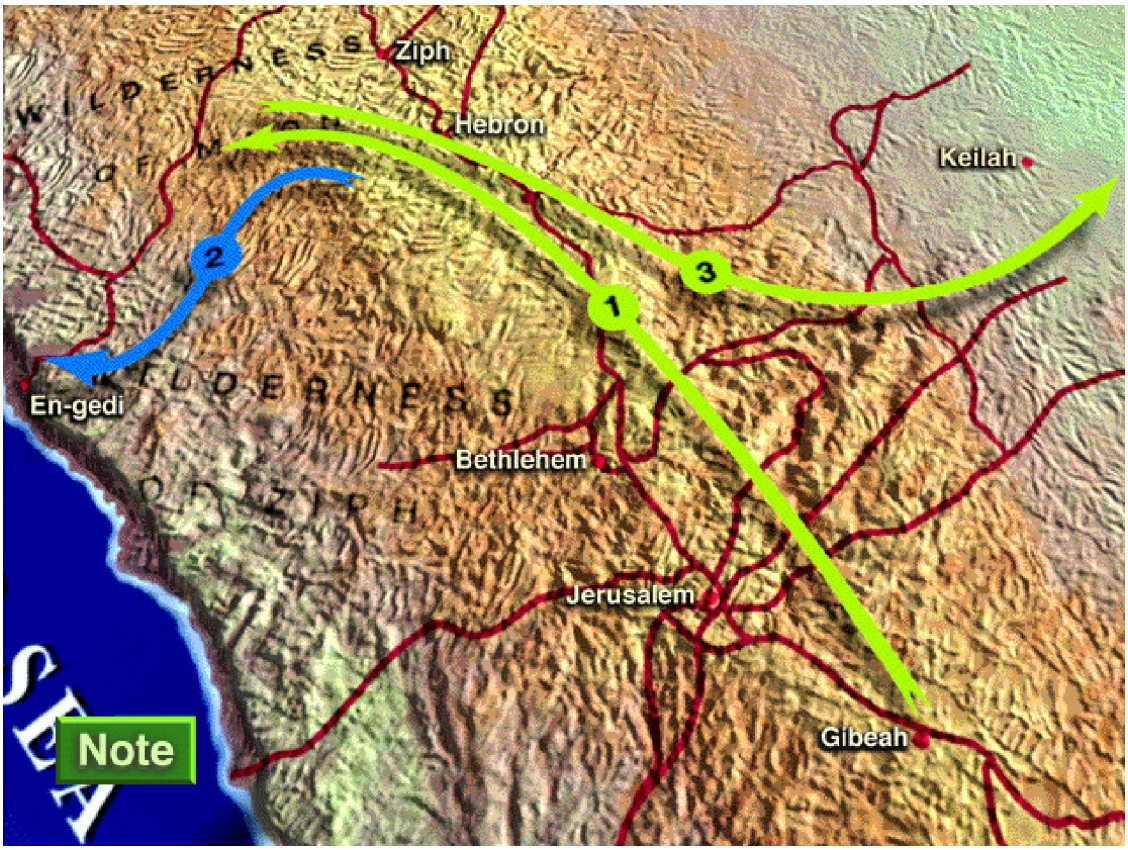
9. Thou hast done it. David expresses his faith that his prayer has been answered (see Ps. 54:7): he has been delivered from Doeg's treachery.

Wait on thy name. See Ps. 25:3, 5; 27:14. David expresses absolute trust in God and dependence on Him.

Saints. Heb. *chasidim* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36). For the great mercy shown him in this affair, David vows to offer public praise (see Ps. 22:25; 35:18). The testimony meeting has a place of real value among God's "saints" of the last days.

PSALM 53

Divine Deliverances Through Prayer
[14]



When former friends turn away and speak with libelous tongues, and the door of escape seems securely to close, a prayer of trustful surrender will often fling open the door. Truly, “the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.” Whether the sould is harasses by rumors from afar or by vain imaginings of an accusing conscience, God delights to send deliverence, and His help should be acknowledged by renewed dedication. Psalm 54
[15]

Historical background to 1 Samuel 23:19–29

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 53 presents a vivid picture of general godlessness in a decadent world, with the assurance that God will save His people. The psalm is a slight variation of Ps. 14 (which see), made, perhaps, to render it suitable for other circumstances.

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[14]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 52:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.
[15]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 628, 629. The phrases, "To the chief Musician," "A Psalm of David," are identical in Ps. 14 and 53.

For comments on this psalm see on Ps. 14. The following comments deal only with passages where the texts differ.

1. Iniquity. Instead of "and have done abominable iniquity" Ps. 14:1 has "have done abominable works."

2. God. Heb. *'Elohim*. Ps. 14:2 reads "The Lord," Heb. *Yahweh*. The same change occurs in vs. 4, 6. The name *Yahweh* does not appear in Ps. 53, whereas both *'Elohim* and Yahweh appear in Ps. 14 (see Vol. I, pp. 170–173).

3. Gone back. Ps. 14:3 reads "they are all gone aside." The sense is almost identical, each clause indicating a departure from God.

4. The workers of iniquity. The word "all" precedes this phrase in Ps. 14:4. "God" is "the Lord" in Ps. 14 (see on Ps. 53:2).

5. In great fear. Verse 5 shows considerable variation from Ps. 14:5, 6.

Where no fear was. There was no occasion for fear, since God was on their side. Some have conjectured that this phrase was added by an inspired scribe to adapt the psalm to use at the time of some great deliverance, as at the time of the overthrow of Sennacherib's army (see 2 Kings 19:20–36).

Scattered the bones. The bodies of the invaders were left unburied (see Eze. 6:5). The idea of a dead body's not receiving honorable burial was most abhorrent to the Oriental mind. This part of the psalm appears to indicate the background of an attack on Jerusalem, which had been repelled, or a siege of the city, which the enemy had raised.

Put them to shame. The falsity of the utterance, "There is no God," had been proved by the defeat of these mockers by an act of God, not by Israel's superior strength.

Despised. Heb. *ma'as*, "rejected."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5 GC 117

PSALM 54

INTRODUCTION.—According to the superscription the historical background of the psalm is the occasion of the Ziphites' informing Saul of David's hiding place south of Hebron (1 Sam. 23:19–24). The psalm consists of two parts, with an abrupt change from the first to the second. Verses 1–3 are an earnest prayer for deliverance; vs. 4–7 an expression of gratitude for deliverance which the psalmist sees with all the certainty of accomplished fact.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 628, 629.

1. By thy name. Compare Acts 4:12. Name stands for character (see on Ps. 7:17).

3. Strangers. Heb. *zarim*. Because *zarim* generally refers to foreigners, many scholars reject the authenticity of the superscription to Ps. 54, inasmuch as the Ziphites were not foreigners. However, *zar* is used of non-Aaronites and non-Levites (Lev. 22:10; Num. 1:51; 3:10), also of those from another family (Deut. 25:5). It is also possible that David used the term contemptuously.

Before them. They have not acted as in God's presence. They pay no attention to God's authority.

Selah. See p. 629.

4. Helper. With dramatic abruptness the psalmist now expresses his absolute confidence in God's deliverance. The psalmist knows that God is with him, although men are against him.

Them that uphold. The LXX has this phrase in the singular. In the LXX the second clause of the verse reads literally, "And the Lord is the helper [or protector] of my soul."

5. In thy truth. That is, "in thy regard for what is right." Thus the prayer transcends an attitude of private vindictiveness. David is praying that God's will may prevail in the destruction of evil.

6. Freely. Heb. *binedabah*, "with willingness," "with spontaneousness." The reference is to a freewill offering (see Ex. 35:29; 36:3; Lev. 7:16; Num. 15:3) in contrast with one required by the law. The confidence expressed in v. 4 has now become a certainty.

Name. See on Ps. 7:17.

7. Hath delivered. If the psalm was written prior to the actual deliverance, this verse is an expression of David's absolute confidence in ultimate deliverance.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4 Te 258; 5T 514

PSALM 55

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 55 is a prayer for help, against the background of the psalmist's desperate plight. The psalm concludes with an expression of conviction that God will intervene. It has frequent repetitions, and mingles complaint, longing, imprecation, indignation, confidence, and hope (Callan). The psalm is the heart cry of one who would find refuge from sorrow in sheer solitude.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 628, 629.

1. Give ear. The four petitions of vs. 1, 2 reveal the intensity of the psalmist's need.

Hide not. See Ps. 13:1; 27:8; cf. Ps. 10:1.

2. I mourn in my complaint. Literally, "I wander in my concern."

3. Oppression. Heb. *'aqah*, "pressure." The word carries the idea of being crushed by a heavy weight.

4. Terrors of death. Knowing that only death would satisfy the conspirators, the psalmist already felt the shadow of death over him (see Ps. 116:3).

5. Horror. Heb. *pallaṣuth*, which seems to indicate deep agitation as a result of fear, is rare (see Job 21:6; Isa. 21:4; Eze. 7:18). The poet uses graphic language to express the intensity of his emotions.

6. The exquisite poetic beauty of this verse (see Jer. 9:2) gives poignant expression to the desire of every Christian who longs for relief from some continuing trouble. How often we wish that we could flee to a place where we could be safe from all annoyances! We forget that, on this earth, we carry our troubles with us unless we surrender them to Jesus. Let us not forget that there is a world into which trouble cannot enter; that world is heaven (see Rev. 21:4).

Fly away. We need to beware of following the instinct that prompts us to escape from circumstances. If that desire becomes habitual, it is a morbid sign. Our work, our home, our relationships, our responsibilities, are a discipline essential to the development of Christian character. Rather than "fly away," we should "call upon God" (v. 16).

Be at rest. Literally, "dwell," "abide."

7. Wilderness. A place uninhabited by man (see Matt. 4:1). Doves are said to abound in wild rocky places in Palestine, far from the habitations of men.

Selah. See p. 629.

10. They. Some suggest that "violence and strife" (v. 9) are here personified, and presented as surrounding the city. However, the subject may be the personal enemies.

11. Deceit and guile. Society in general was disorganized.

Streets. Literally, "broad place," "market place" (RSV), where civic business was carried on, where justice ought to be administered.

12. An enemy. The psalmist passes from the general mass of conspirators to one individual.

Reproached. Or, "taunted."

Borne it. It is not difficult to stand up under the slander of an avowed enemy; it is the calumny of one who was once our bosom friend that is hard to bear, and often overwhelming.

Hid myself. Instead of opening my heart to him.

13. Thou. See on v. 12.

14. We took. The Hebrew imperfect tense here denotes customary action. There were frequent, intimate counsels.

Sweet counsel. Heb. *sod*, "close, intimate communion."

In company. Not only did they enjoy fellowship in private; they also associated in public worship. There is great pathos in this verse.

15. Go down. See Ps. 9:17; cf. Num. 16:30.

Hell. Heb. *she'ol*, "the figurative abode of the dead" (see on Prov. 15:11).

In their dwellings. See vs. 3, 9–11. Wickedness abounds in their houses, their transactions, their hearts. It is well for the community that wickedness should be punished.

16. As for me. In the Hebrew the pronoun stands at the beginning of the sentence and hence is emphatic. The psalmist speaks for himself and contrasts his attitude with the conduct of the traitors.

17. Evening, and morning. Daniel prayed three times daily (Dan. 6:10). True religion is strengthened by regular and frequent times of prayer (see Ps. 119:164).

19. Abideth of old. See Deut. 33:27; Ps. 90:2.

Selah. The appearance of this word within a verse is uncommon (see Ps. 57:3). See p. 629.

20. He. The traitor who had been the psalmist's intimate friend (see vs. 12–14). The psalmist reverts to a discussion of the treachery of his friend.

Covenant. A relationship implied in close friendship.

21. Smoother than butter. He was a downright hypocrite (see Ps. 28:3; 57:4). The concrete images in this verse are graphic and impressive.

22. Burden. Heb. *yehab*, a word occurring only here in the OT; hence, its meaning is uncertain. The Talmud assigns to it the meaning "burden." The LXX has *merimna*, "care," "anxiety," "worry." *Merimna* occurs in 1 Peter 5:7, "Casting all your care upon him." The verb, *merimnao*, occurs in Matt. 6:34 and is translated "take thought," better rendered "take anxious thought."

These promises made to the righteous who cast themselves in faith upon God, the psalmist repeats to himself, and shares them with all who would learn from his experience. God does not always remove the load, but He supports those who set forward in faith.

In his oratorio *Elijah*, Mendelssohn employs the words of this verse in the beautiful chorale for four voices sung after Elijah's prayer for rain on Mt. Carmel.

23. Them. The enemies of the psalmist, the men described in the next clause.

The pit of destruction. See Ps. 28:1.

Bloody and deceitful men. Literally, "men of bloods and deceit." They were the psalmist's would-be murderers.

Half their days. "Length of days" was a mark of God's pleasure (see Prov. 3:2). God wants His children to live the normal life span. The indulgences of wickedness tend to shorten life.

In thee. The psalmist will not trust in violence or deceit, but only in God (see Ps. 7:1; 11:1). Trust in God is one of the lofty concepts of the book of Psalms.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

6 EW 20; 1T 70
14 ML 199
17 5T 164; 7T 44
22 COL 51; ML 10; 4T 285; 7T 297; 8T 126; 9T 17

PSALM 56

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 56, 57 have been called "twin psalms," because of similarities in content and in development of theme. They begin with the same words, consist of two similar parts embodying prayer for deliverance desired, and praise for deliverance gained; and employ a refrain at the close of each section. Written under circumstances of grievous trouble, they both express the complete confidence in God that overcomes all fear. The two parts of Ps. 56 (vs. 1–4, 5–11) are similar in thought, the second more emphatic than the first. Each closes with a refrain, augmented on its second occurrence. Two verses of gratitude are added to the poem. According to the superscription Ps. 56 was the work of David (as Ps. 57 is known to be; see Introduction to Ps. 57), composed as a result of his experience with the Philistines at Gath (see on 1 Sam. 21:13).

On the superscription see pp. 616, 628. "Jonath" is from the Heb. *yonah*, meaning "dove." It may be that the title of the melody to which this psalm was sung was suggested by the feelings of David, driven from home, seeking safety in a remote region, like a dove driven from its nesting place. There is something plaintive and tender implicit in this supposition.

1. Be merciful. See Ps. 51:1; 57:1.

Man. Heb. *'enosh*, "man in his frailty" (see on Ps. 8:4). The contrast between "God," the Powerful One, and *'enosh* is strong.

Swallow me up. The LXX reads "trample me down." Compare v. 2.

Daily. Compare vs. 2, 5.

2. O thou most High. Heb. *marom*, not used elsewhere as a title of the Deity, and it is doubtful whether it is so intended here. A slight change in vowel pointing yields the reading "from a height," which may be interpreted as meaning "haughtily."

3. I will trust. The keynote of the psalm. When fear oppresses, by an act of will we may put our trust in God. There is in such a resolution a sound basis for Christian experience. We need to assert our trust.

4. What flesh can do. See Matt. 10:28. Verse 4 is the refrain of the psalm, and is repeated in augmented form in vs. 10 and 11.

6. They gather. The devious methods employed to pursue the psalmist are represented by the rapid succession of clauses without expressed grammatical connection.

Soul. See on Ps. 16:10.

7. Shall they escape by iniquity? The Hebrew of the clause thus translated is obscure. If the KJV rendering is correct the psalmist is inquiring in effect, Can they find safety in wickedness? Can it be possible that the enemies owe their apparent safety to their great wickedness?

The people. Literally, "the peoples." The psalmist may here be extending the range of the word "enemies" to include all wicked people, all wickedness, in his imprecation (see p. 624).

8. Tellest. Dost number, recount, or keep count of (see on Ps. 48:12). David turns abruptly from imprecation to tender petition for himself.

My wanderings. See 1 Sam. 21:10.

Put thou my tears. As though God took note of his tears, drop by drop. The illustration is a recognition of God's tender solicitude for His child.

Bottle. Heb. *no'd*, the skin bottle that was used by the Easterners as a container for water, milk, wine, etc. The psalmist prays that his tears may be placed in a skin bottle, that they may be remembered before God.

Book. Compare Ps. 69:28; 139:16;; Mal. 3:16. "In the book of God's remembrance … every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ's sake, is recorded" (GC 481).

9. This I know. The psalmist is sure that God is on his side. Such certainty brooks no defeat. We do well to count the "I know's" of Christian experience (see Job 19:25; Ps. 20:6; 135:5; 140:12; 2 Tim. 1:12).

10. Will I praise. This entire clause is a forceful addition to the earlier refrain (v. 4).

11. Man. Heb. *'adam* (see on Ps. 8:4); the clause that stands parallel in v. 4 reads "flesh."

12. Thy vows. Two verses of thanksgiving conclude the poem (the "twin psalm," Ps. 57, closes with a refrain, without verses of this type, having only 11 verses in all). The psalmist has vowed to express his gratitude to God for answering his prayer. He now proceeds to fulfill his obligation.

Praises. Heb. *todoth*, also representing "thank offerings" (see Jer. 17:26; 33:11).

13. Before God. The phrase suggests agreement with the will of God. God said to Abraham: "Walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. 17:1).

Light of the living. Compare Job 33:30.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 AA 467; MB 156; PP 692

4 ML 297

8 GC 481

11–13MH 101

PSALM 57

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 57 is similar in theme, structure, and style to its "twin," Ps. 56 (see Introduction to Ps. 56), but reflects a more triumphant tone. The psalm begins with a prayer for mercy breathed in full confidence in God's power to save; then briefly describes the psalmist's trouble, and ends in praise of God's goodness. The psalm has two parts, each closing with the refrain. David composed this beautiful lyric in the cave of Adullam (see 1 Sam. 22:1; PP 658).

On the superscription see pp. 616, 628, 629.

1. Be merciful. See Ps. 56:1, 3, 4. Verses 1–5 constitute the first section of the psalm.

Shadow of thy wings. See on Ps. 17:8; cf. Ruth 2:12; Matt. 23:37. The tender affection for God here expressed is entirely unlike the attitude of the heathen toward their pagan gods.

2. God most high. Heb. *'Elohim 'Elyon* (see Vol. I, pp. 170–173). This title for God occurs also in Ps. 78:56.

God. Heb. *'El* (see Vol. I, p. 171).

Performeth. Heb. *gamar*, "to bring to completion" (see Ps. 138:8).

3. Selah. See on Ps. 55:19; see p. 629.

His mercy. See Ps. 25:10; 26:3.

God "would sooner send every angel out of glory to the relief of faithful souls, to make a hedge about them, than have them deceived and led away by the lying wonders of Satan" (EW 88).

4. Soul. Or simply, "I" (see on Ps. 16:10).

Lions. The psalmist's enemies are like savage lions (see Ps. 7:2; 10:9).

Are set on fire. They are aflame with the desire to destroy David.

A sharp sword. A figure of slander (see Ps. 55:21).

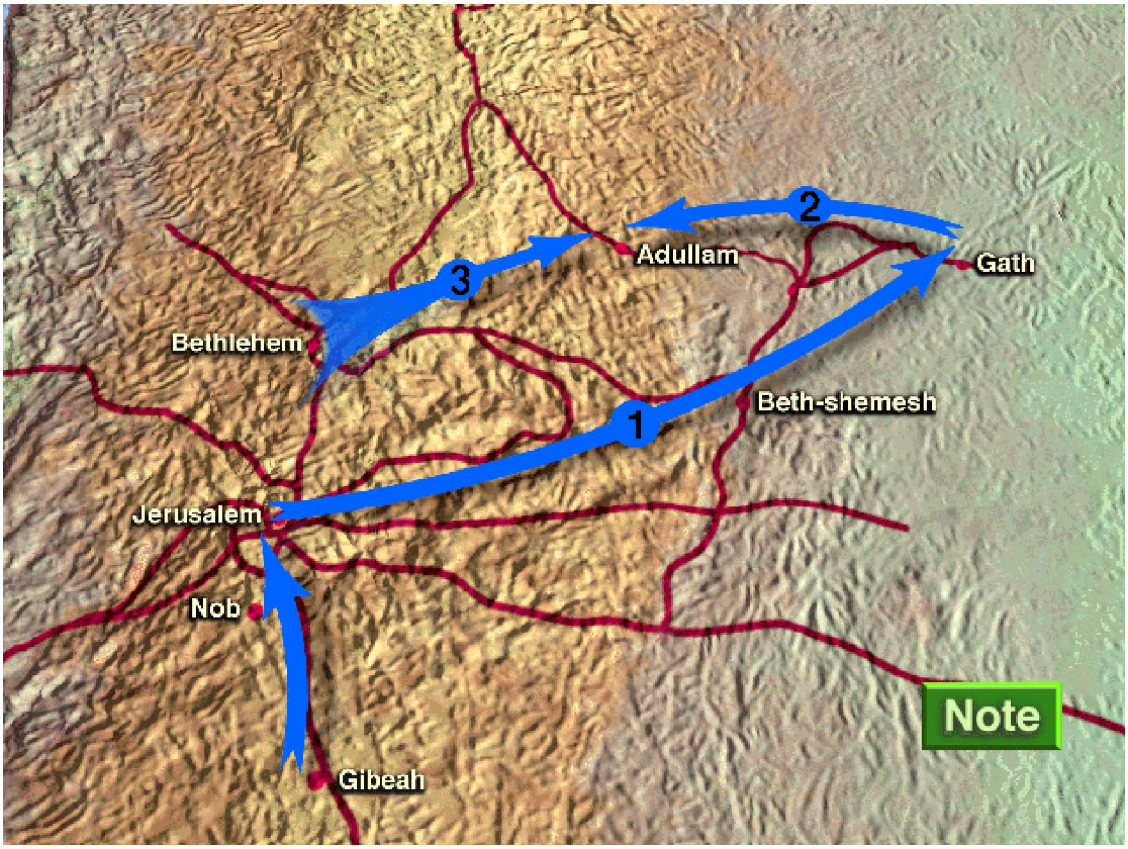
5. Be thou exalted. Verse 5 is the refrain of the poem, repeated in v. 11.

6. Prepared a net. Compare Ps. 9:15. Verses 6–11 constitute the second section of the psalm.

My soul. See on v. 4.

Triumphant Confidence in Time of Peril
[16]

[16]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 53:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



When, because of a finite approach to problems, mistakes are made that endanger the welfare of close associates, God still has a way out. Such mistakes can, in the providence of God, be turned into steppingstones for further development of character. God is pleased to exceed His promises. The more urgently a soul cries for help, the stronger becomes the resolve to forsake all and follow God, and the clearer becomes the path marked out by God. His mysterious guidance is beyond human comprehension. Psalm 57:1-3, 9, 10
[17]

Historical background to 1 Samuel 22:1

They have digged a pit. See on Ps. 7:15.

Selah. See p. 629.

7. Fixed. Heb. *nakon*, "firmly established."

Verses 7–11 appear, with variations, as Ps. 108:1–5 (see comments there).

8. Psaltery. Heb. *nebel*, the "harp" (see pp. 33, 34).

Harp. Heb. *kinnor*, the "lyre" (see pp. 34–36).

I myself will awake early. Or, "I will wake up the dawn." The psalmist recognized the value of devoting the first moments of the day to worship (see on Ps. 5:3). Compare Milton's line: "Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn."

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[17]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

9. The people. Rather, "the peoples." The Hebrew noun is plural. David's great deliverance prompts him to make known God's goodness among the nations. Thus David expresses his realization that Israel was called to be the light of nations.

10. Thy mercy. See on Ps. 25:10; 26:3; 36:5, 7.

11. Be thou exalted. The refrain, identical with v. 5. "Heaven and earth have … a mutually interwoven history, and the blessed, glorious end of this is in the sunrise of the Divine glory over both" (Delitzsch).

Let thy glory. The visible brightness of divine glory is but a reminder of the infinite perfection and beauty of the divine character. That which may be seen is ever to impress upon created beings the infinite goodness of God.

PSALM 58

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 58is a condemnation of unjust judges, and hence a vehement reproof and warning for all who share in injustice and oppression. Forceful in imagery and general style, the psalm makes the charge of injustice, passes sentence of punishment, and rejoices in the justice of God, the great Judge. In this psalm the contrast between the unjust judges of earth, and God, the righteous Judge, is most striking.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 628, 629.

1. O congregation. Heb. *'elem*, the meaning of which is obscure and many definitions have been suggested. The translation of the RSV, "gods," is from *'elim*. The LXX and the Vulgate consider *'elem* an intensive adverb further emphasizing the adverb "indeed." It is impossible to know precisely what the psalmist intended to express by *'elem*.

The ironical rhetorical questions of v. 1 introduce the theme of the psalm. They are addressed to the unjust judges in the land.

2. Ye weigh. Instead of weighing out justice, they weigh out violence. The psalmist's statement is made in sarcasm.

Hands. Contrasted with "heart." Iniquity is conceived in the heart and carried out with the hands.

3. They go astray. A generalization that the wicked usually show a tendency to evil from early childhood.

4. Their poison. The malignant words that they speak (see Ps. 140:3; Rom. 3:13).

The deaf adder. Their obstinate wickedness is compared to the stubbornness of the adder, or asp, that refuses to submit to the snake charmer. The snake is not really deaf, but appears so because of the difficulty of charming it. The expression "deaf as an adder" is probably to be traced to this famous reference to snake charming (Eccl. 10:11; see Jer. 8:17). The popular misconception that the adder is deaf and that snakes respond only to the gesticulations of the snake charmer has been adequately refuted.

5. Charmers. Snake charmers have always been common in the East, and are especially prominent in India. They make their living both by demonstrating their power over serpents by way of exhibition and by drawing them out of hiding places where they lurk as a danger to travelers.

6. Break their teeth. The poet turns from the image of the snake and the snake charmer to a picture of young lions whose teeth must be broken lest they continue their depredations (see Ps. 3:7).

Verses 6–9 contain vigorous imprecation, piling metaphor upon metaphor (see p. 624). They show that God will make unjust judges powerless in their designs. Since the wicked cannot be reclaimed, the psalmist prays that they may be rendered powerless.

7. Melt away as waters. The psalmist's prayer is that his enemies may perish as the swollen waters of a torrent are lost in the desert sands or utterly dry up in the drought of summer (see 2 Sam. 14:14; Job 6:15–17).

8. Which melteth. Perhaps referring to the popular belief that the snail gradually wastes away, as its slimy trail might seem to suggest. Others think the expression refers to the shriveling up of snails in the dry season.

The untimely birth. Compare Job 3:16.

9. Before your pots. The picture is not entirely clear. Some think it is that of desert nomads building a fire in the open air; a gust of wind puts out the fire before the cooking vessels are warmed. The force of the illustration is to express the psalmist's desire that the destruction of the wicked may take place quickly.

10. Shall rejoice. Compare Deut. 32:41–43.

Shall wash his feet. Perhaps a reference to a practice thought to have been common in the wars of the period (see Ps. 68:23). For example, in Ugaritic literature (see p. 618) the war goddess Anath is said to "wash her hands in the blood of warriors."

11. A man. Every man, or men in general, will recognize the truth that God does interpose in human affairs, rewarding righteousness and punishing sin.

A reward. Literally, "fruit" (see Prov. 1:31; Isa. 3:10; 1 Tim. 4:8).

Judgeth in the earth. Although it may at times seem that God permits the wrong and injustice of earth to continue unhindered, the fact remains that His eye is upon all the misdeeds of sinful men, that He is keeping a strict account, and that in due time He will interpose. At all times there is a boundary beyond which wicked men are not suffered to go. This lesson is closely related to the one King Nebuchadnezzar learned during his seven years of madness.

PSALM 59

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 59 is similar in background to Ps. 56, 57, 58. It is a cry for deliverance from great danger, closing with a sudden dramatic turn of thanksgiving that deliverance is certain. The psalm has two major sections: vs. 1–10 containing a plea for deliverance from enemies, and vs. 11–17 containing a petition for punishment upon them. The vigorous but formal style of the psalm is marked by the repetition of both a picturesque verse (see vs. 6 and 14) and a refrain (see vs. 9 and 17) at corresponding places in the two sections.

According to the superscription the occasion for the composition of the psalm was the incident in which Saul sent men to watch the house of David, with the purpose of killing him (see 1 Sam. 19:11–18).

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627, 629.

1. Deliver me. Or, "snatch me away." This is the psalmist's repeated prayer (see Ps. 7:1; 17:13; 22:20; etc.). David desires protection from all his enemies, whether they are in his own household, in the court, in the nation, or among other nations.

Defend me. Literally, "make me high," that is, "make me inaccessible" (see Ps. 18:48).

2. Bloody men. Literally, "men of bloods," that is, murderers.

3. Lie in wait. The enemy is likened to wild beasts, ready to spring upon their prey (see on Ps. 7:2).

My soul. Or, "me" (see on Ps. 16:10). According to the account of 1 1 Sam. 19:11–18, David's wife, Michal, the daughter of Saul, told David of Saul's murderous intent, and helped him to escape through a window by night.

The mighty. Or, "fierce ones," those employed by Saul to carry out his nefarious purpose.

Not for my transgression. The psalmist protests his innocence.

4. Run and prepare. The language of military activity.

Without my fault. That is, "for no fault of mine" (RSV).

Awake. See Ps. 7:6; 35:23.

To help me. Literally, "to meet me," with the idea of bringing help.

5. Thou. The pronoun receives additional force from its position at the beginning of the sentence.

Lord God of hosts. See on Ps. 24:10; see also Ps. 80:4, 19; 89:8; Isa. 1:9.

God of Israel. See on Ps. 14:7; see also Ps. 72:18. This series of titles calls attention to God's infinite power and His peculiar regard for His children (see Vol. I, pp. 170–173).

To visit. Heb. *paqad*, a word describing not only the act of visiting but also what the visitor accomplishes by his visit (see on Ps. 8:4). Here the object of the visit is evidently to punish.

All the heathen. The psalmist includes in his prayer not only his wicked, personal enemies, but all the enemies of God (see on Ps. 2:1; 9:5).

Be not merciful. For an explanation of the spirit of seeming vindictiveness to which David gives expression in vs. 5, 8, 10–15, see p. 624.

Selah. Compare v. 13. The term appears at corresponding positions in the two major sections of the psalm (see Introduction to Ps. 59). On the meaning of "selah" see p. 629.

6. Make a noise. Or, "snarl," or, "growl."

Like a dog. The psalmist compares his enemies (vs. 1, 2) to the half—starved, half—wild dogs of the East, which sleep hidden away during the day and come into the towns and villages at night to prowl about in search of food (see on Ps. 22:16).

Go round about. The enemies patrol the city to see that the psalmist does not escape. The Hebrew of this verse is almost identical with the Hebrew of v. 14 (see on v. 14).

7. Belch out. Or, "pour out," "cause to bubble" (see Prov. 15:2).

Doth hear. See on Ps. 10:11.

8. Thou. See on v. 5.

Shalt laugh. See on Ps. 2:4.

The heathen. See on v. 5.

9. His strength. Many Hebrew manuscripts and the LXX, as well as other versions, read "my strength," thus conveying the thought that by this expression the psalmist is addressing God (see v. 17; Ps. 28:7, 8). The phrase "because of" does not occur in the Hebrew. Verses, 9, 10 constitute a refrain, which is repeated with variations in v. 17.

Will I wait. After deliverance there must be no relaxing of effort lest we give the enemy the opportunity to make another onslaught while we are off guard.

Defence. Literally, "a secure height," "a stronghold."

10. Mercy. Heb. *chesed* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

Shall prevent. Literally, "shall confront" (see on Ps. 18:5; 21:3).

Shall let me see. See Ps. 54:7.

11. Slay them not. That is, not immediately. Cain was allowed to wander on earth as a living example of the wretched consequences of hate and murder (see Gen. 4:12–14). Ps. 59:11 begins the second section of the psalm. Verses 11–15 contain a series of strong imprecations, calling for a gradual bringing of retribution upon the wicked enemies of the psalmist, perhaps that time may be given for men to see the full consequences of sin (see on v. 5).

My people. An expression suggesting the psalmist's tender regard for Israel. He feels that the entire nation should be concerned over the general lawlessness.

Forget. When we have enjoyed complete deliverance, we tend to forget the dangers from which we have been delivered (see Ps. 78:11, 42; 106:13, 21; etc.).

Shield. In harmony with Ugaritic usage (see p. 618), the Heb. *magen* should probably be translated as a verb, "to implore," "to beseech," as also elsewhere in the psalms (see on Ps. 84:9). The clause would then be rendered, "We beseech thee, O Lord."

12. Sin of their mouth. See v. 7.

Be taken. Literally, "be caught," that is, as in a trap or snare (see Ps. 55:23).

In their pride. Perhaps while they were confident of their success.

13. Consume. Literally, "make an end," or "complete." Not immediately, but after God's workings have been clearly seen by all. The expression is repeated for the sake of emphasis (see Ps. 57:1).

That God ruleth. That God is the universal sovereign, punishing wickedness and rewarding righteousness (see 1 Sam. 17:46).

Jacob. See on Ps. 14:7.

Ends of the earth. God holds sway over all the kingdoms of the world, not over Israel alone.

Selah. See p. 629.

14. And at evening. See v. 6. The Hebrew of v. 14 is the same as that of v. 6 except for the addition of the conjunction *we,* "and," at the beginning of v. 14. Verse 6 describes the conduct of the enemies; v. 15 describes the punishment the psalmist invokes upon these enemies in the light of their conduct. The language is that of triumph. The enemies may return and howl, but they will be disappointed.

15. Let them wander. In the Hebrew this verse begins with *hemmah*, normally translated "they," but here not accounted for by the translation of the KJV. Ugaritic (see p. 618) shows that *hemmah* is also a particle, with the meaning "lo," "behold," or "indeed." Such a translation here fits the context well. The clause should then be rendered, "Behold, they wander up and down for meat."

Meat. Old English for food. The psalmist was the desired prey.

Grudge. Heb. *lin*, literally, "to spend the night." A slight change in vowel pointing yields *lun*, which means "to murmur." This change has been adopted by the LXX, the KJV, and other versions. The enemies search for prey all night long, but in vain.

16. But I. In sharp contrast with the enemies of v. 15.

Power. Heb. *'oz*, "strength" in v. 9.

In the morning. Seemingly contrasted with "at evening" (vs. 6, 14).

Refuge. Or, "place of escape." Although the psalmist used means of his own to effect his escape (see 1 Sam. 19:12), he rightly attributed his deliverance to divine mercy.

17. Unto thee. A refrain similar to that of vs. 9, 10.

PSALM 60

INTRODUCTION.—According to the superscription Ps. 60 was written by David during his wars with the Edomites. The psalm portrays Israel's humiliation after a major defeat (vs. 1–3), appeals to God to fulfill His promises of victory (vs. 4–8), and expression confidence in ultimate victory over Israel's foes (vs. 9–12). The psalm has great rapidity of style, employs vivid metaphors, and abounds in the expression of hope.

On the superscription, which is unusually detailed, see pp. 616, 627.

1. Thou. The eightfold repetition of this pronoun at the beginning of the successive clauses in vs. 1–4 in KJV (a rhetorical figure called anaphora) makes the English of the passage strikingly forceful rhetorically.

Cast us off. Compare Ps. 43:2; 44:9–11.

Scattered. Or, "broken." The Hebrew word thus translated suggests either the defeat of an army whose ranks are broken, or the breaking down of a wall through the use of siege instruments (see Judges 21:15; 2 Sam. 5:20; 6:8).

Displeased. The psalmist regarded defeat as an evidence of God's displeasure.

Turn thyself to us. Or,"restore us."

2. Earth to tremble. The metaphor of an earthquake is used to portray the panic that seizes a country in time of defeat.

Breaches. That is, "breakings," or, "crashes." The psalmist prays that God will fill up the breaks made by the earthquake, that is, repair the devastation caused by the enemy.

3. Hard things. Or, "severe things," that is, such things as disappointments, defeats, trials.

Wine of astonishment. Literally, "wine of reeling." The nation, as it were, had been made to drink an intoxicating wine which had caused it to reel like a drunken man (see Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15–17).

4. A banner. Heb. *nes*, "a standard," "an ensign," "a signal," "a sign." Despite the nation's humiliation, the psalmist sees hope in the call to Israel to rally under the banner of God.

The truth. God's people are called upon to uphold the principles of truth and justice, that the world may be attracted to the religion of Christ.

Selah. See p. 629.

5. Beloved. The psalmist seems to be speaking of the nation of Israel (see Deut. 33:12).

Thy right hand. See Ps. 17:7; 44:3.

Hear me. The Hebrew text itself reads "answer us," which ancient Jewish scholars changed in the margin to "answer me" or "hear me." This change has the support of many ancient versions. However, there seems to be no valid reason for departing from the reading of the Hebrew text.

Verses 5–12 appear with slight variation as Ps. 108:6–13 (see comments there).

6. God hath spoken. God had promised the land of Canaan to Israel (see Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 17:8; Ps. 105:8–11). David's plea is that God carry out the full intentions of the promise.

In his holiness. God's holiness is often mentioned by Bible writers in connection with the observation that His promises may be relied on (see Ps. 89:35; Amos 4:2).

I will divide. See Joshua 1:6; 13:6, 7; 14:5; etc.

Shechem. The name of this city is here probably used to designate the entire region west of the Jordan (by a figure of speech, a chief city here stands for a whole territory). Shechem was Jacob's second stopping point in Palestine when he returned from Mesopotamia (Gen. 33:18). Later it became an important city, if not the chief city of Ephraim (see 1 Kings 12:1). The mention of Shechem in this catalogue of places is significant. Near Shechem the law was read when Israel took possession of the Promised Land (see 27, 28; Joshua 8:33–35; see on Gen. 12:6).

Succoth. A place east of the Jordan where Jacob encamped on his return from Mesopotamia (Gen. 33:16, 17).

7. Gilead. A region east of the Jordan, allotted to Gad and Manasseh (see Num. 32:39, 40; Joshua 17:1; see on Ps. 22:12).

Ephraim. Ephraim and Judah were the chief tribes on the west of Jordan.

Strength of mine head. Or, "the stronghold of my head," regarded by some scholars as figuratively designating a helmet (see RSV). Ephraim is described as the chief defense of the whole country. After the division of the kingdom, Ephraim was the main tribe of the northern kingdom (see Deut. 33:17).

Judah. One of the chief tribes, in position, numbers, and prophetic promise (see Gen. 49:8–12).

Lawgiver. From the Heb. *chaqaq*, "to decree." The form used here means "a prescriber of laws," hence "a commander [of troops in the field]," or "a commander's scepter [as a symbol of authority]." To Judah was entrusted the government of Israel (see 1 Sam. 16:1; 2 Sam. 2:4; 2 Sam. 5:1–3; Ps. 78:68).

8. Moab. A country extending east from the Dead Sea to the desert, north to the river Arnon, and south to Edom. Moab had planned to destroy Israel at the time of Israel's entrance into Canaan (see Num. 22). Balaam prophesied the subjugation of Moab (see Num. 24:17). David fulfilled the prophecy (2 Sam. 8:2).

Washpot. Or, "washbasin." A metaphor expressing extreme contempt, likening Moab to a basin in which a conqueror washes his feet.

Edom. A country in the region south of the Dead Sea. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau.

Cast out my shoe. Commentators have suggested the following meanings for this somewhat obscure figure: (1) Edom is a slave to whom the master throws his shoes to be cleaned or otherwise cared for. (2) Edom is a land which is taken possession of by the symbolic act of taking off the shoe and casting it over a piece of ground (see on Ruth 4:7, 8).

Philistia. The Philistines were traditional enemies of the Israelites. Their territories lay along the Mediterranean coast line to the west of Judah.

Triumph thou because of me. Or, "shout in triumph over me"—an expression obviously ironical. In Ps. 108:9, where this verse seems to be repeated with slight variation, the expression reads, "over Philistia will I triumph." Some alter the text of Ps. 60:8 to make it agree with the reading of Ps. 108:9 (see RSV). Either reading can be fitted into the context. Like Israel's other enemies, Philistia must not triumph, but be triumphed over.

9. The strong city. Most likely a reference to Sela, capital of Edom, probably the city later called Petra, which could be approached only through a narrow gorge with rocky, sometimes vertical, walls. The city was rock hewn and practically inaccessible to the invader (see Obadiah 1, 3). David expresses eagerness to capture this stronghold. For an illustrated description of the later Roman city of Petra, see *The National Geographic Magazine,* 67:129–165, Feb., 1935.

Lead me into Edom. This verse is virtually a war cry. The hoped-for victory was actually achieved by Joab and Abishai during the reign of David (see on 2 Sam. 8:12, 13; see also on 1 Kings 11:15).

10. Cast us off. Compare Ps. 43:2; 44:9–11.

11. Give us help. The psalmist recognizes that God is his real source of help.

12. Do valiantly. Literally, "achieve might" (see Ps. 118:16). The Hebrew word for "might" (*chayil*) contains the idea of power or ability to accomplish. *Chayil* is used to describe the worth and efficiency of a woman (see Ruth 3:11; see on Prov. 31:10); also the valor of a brave warrior (Joshua 1:14; 1 Chron. 5:24).

Our enemies. The psalm, though beginning in humiliation, closes in confident hope (see Ps. 44:5). David was permitted to see the answer to his prayer. Before the close of his reign Israel had greatly extended her boundaries. The promises to Abraham were beginning to be fulfilled (see Gen. 15:18; see on 1 Kings 4:21).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

12 5T 487

PSALM 61

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 61 is the prayer of an exile longing for restoration to the joys of God's sanctuary. Some commentators believe that it was possibly composed when David was in exile at the time of Absalom's rebellion. It is said that this beautiful prayer-poem was sung daily at morning worship in the early ages of the Christian church.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 629.

1. My cry. See on Ps. 17:1.

2. End of the earth. The expression is evidently hyperbolic, and does not necessarily denote distance. The language possibly reflects the writer's mental state. The poet describes vividly his feeling of separation from the sanctuary. He seems as far removed as if he were actually in the ends of the earth. To him Jerusalem is the center of the earth.

Is overwhelmed. Literally, "is feeble," probably suggesting discouragement.

Rock that is higher. The Oriental traveler is delighted when he can find, jutting high above the illimitable blazing desert, a great crag under whose shade he may rest or on whose top he may find safety from beasts and other marauders (see Isa. 32:2). It is well to pray not so much for deliverance as for endurance and elevation. Troubles tend to decrease when they are surveyed from a height. See E. Johnson's hymn, "O Sometimes the Shadows Are Deep," No. 633 in *The Church Hymnal,* in which the refrain takes its inspiration from this verse.

3. A shelter. Heb. *machseh*, "a refuge," that is, something that offers cover or protection.

Tower. Heb. *migdal*, usually referring to a man-made elevation, such as a watch-tower in a field (see on Ps. 18:2, in which this idea is amplified in a succession of metaphors).

4. I will abide. Or, "let me sojourn." The psalmist prays for the day when once more he shall have the privilege of worshiping in the sanctuary (see on Ps. 15:1).

Tabernacle. Literally, "tent," referring to the temporary nature of the sanctuary at that time.

For ever. See on Ps. 23:6.

Covert of thy wings. See on Ps. 17:8; see also 36:7; 57:1; 63:7; 91:4.

Selah. See p. 629.

5. Hast heard. The psalmist had evidently made specific promises to God. It appears that with these in mind he is emboldened to press his requests.

Vows. Promises made by the psalmist, probably in time of exile.

Heritage. Evidently a reference to the psalmist's inheritance in Canaan, figuratively denoting all the temporal and spiritual blessings of God's promises.

Fear thy name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17.

6. Thou wilt prolong. The clause reads literally, "Thou wilt cause to add days upon the days of the king." In absolute confidence the psalmist prays for the extension of the life of the king through the providence of God.

7. He shall abide. Or, "may he dwell."

Mercy and truth. A beautiful prayer for a long and useful life in God's presence, a life controlled by mercy and truth (see on Ps. 57:3; 85:10; Prov. 20:28).

8. Unto thy name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17.

Vows. See on v. 5. The psalm closes with an expression of the psalmist's deep desire to take part in the service and worship of God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–3ML 105
2 PP 413
2, 3 5T 130
3 EW 44

PSALM 62

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 62 contains several resemblances in phraseology to Ps. 39, but is different in theme. The psalm counsels men, in whatsoever trials they find themselves, to trust wholly in God, because no human being can be of substantial help. It is a lofty expression of the psalmist's triumphant faith in God. It employs extraordinary nobility of phrasing. The psalm is characterized by the sixfold use of the Hebrew word *'ak* (translated "truly," "only," "surely") at the beginning of vs. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9. The refrain is found in vs. 1, 2 and 5, 6, preceding, rather than following, the units of thought.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 617.

1. Truly. Heb. *'ak*, also meaning "only," "surely." *'Ak* intensifies the force of the word or phrase to which it is attached. It occurs six times in this psalm (see vs. 2, 4, 5, 6, 9). In v. 1 *'ak* emphasizes the phrase "upon God." In the Hebrew the phrase thus translated immediately follows *'ak*. The clause conveys the thought that the psalmist waits upon God *only,* to the exclusion of all others. Another illustration of the force of *'ak* to intensify the meaning of what immediately follows is found in Ps. 39:5, 6, where, in the Hebrew, *'ak* (translated "verily" or "surely") occurs at the beginning of three successive lines, as compared with six here.

My soul. Used idiomatically for "I" (see on Ps. 16:10).

Waiteth. Heb. *dumiyyah*, a noun, not a verb. The idea expressed is "silence," "silent waiting," or silent expectation (see Ps. 65:1). The psalmist's mind is at rest with God. This calmness comes to him who leaves all in God's hands.

My salvation. See Ps. 35:3; 37:39.

2. Only. Heb. *'ak*, "only," "surely," the second appearance of the word in this psalm (see on v. 1).

Rock. Compare Ps. 18:2, 61:2.

My salvation. The psalmist observes that not only does his salvation come from God (v. 1); God *is* his salvation.

Greatly moved. See Ps. 37:24; Micah 7:8. Compare v. 6, where the psalmist, with still greater confidence, says that he will not be moved at all. This represents the triumph of faith.

3. Will ye imagine mischief? The Hebrew word used here occurs but once in the OT, and its meaning is somewhat obscure. Some believe that it is derived from the Heb. *huth*, to which they attribute the meaning "to shout at," or "to attack." Others derive it from the Heb. *hathath*, to which they assign the meaning "to speak incessantly," or "to overwhelm with reproof." In either case the psalmist is addressing a reproof to his enemies, because of their evil deeds or the words they have spoken against him.

A man. The psalmist is evidently referring to himself.

As a bowing wall. That is, a wall that bows out, or swells out, about to fall (see Isa. 30:13).

4. Only. Heb. *'ak*, the third occurrence of the word (see on v. 1). The enemies have no other thought than to bring down the psalmist. Nothing would please them better.

Selah. See p. 629.

5. Wait thou. In its first appearance the refrain expressed the psalmist's resignation (see v. 1; see also Introduction to Ps. 62). Here, in its second appearance, it exhorts the psalmist to resign himself into God's care.

Only. Heb. *'ak*, the fourth occurrence of the word (see on v. 1).

Expectation. Compare v. 1. We may confidently look forward to ultimate, complete salvation. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

6. He only. See on v. 2. Heb. *'ak*, the fifth occurrence of the word (see on v. 1).

7. Rock of my strength. See on Ps. 18:2; see also Ps. 9:9; 46:1; 94:22.

8. Ye people. The psalmist frequently includes the "people" in his expressions of hope. As used here, "people" may refer especially to those who did not forsake him in his hour of trouble (see 2 Sam. 17:2). But in its widest sense the term includes all persons in all circumstances who may hear the words of this psalm.

Pour out. See Ps. 42:4; 142:2.

Selah. See p. 629.

9. Surely. Heb. *'ak*, the sixth occurrence of the word (see on v. 1); in this case *'ak* intensifies "vanity."

Men of low degree. See on Ps. 49:2.

A lie. Unsubstantial, unworthy to be relied upon.

To be laid in the balance. Literally, "to go up in the two balances." When men, whether of high or of low degree, are placed in the balances, they are even lighter than vanity.

10. If riches increase. Even if riches increase naturally, without robbery or extortion, do not trust in them.

11. Once; twice. Compare Job 33:14; 40:5. Compare also the Ugaritic (see p. 618) phrase, "Two sacrifices Baal hates, three the Rider of the Clouds."

12. Mercy. Heb. *chesed*, "divine love" (see Additional Note on Ps. 36). God is both a God of power and a God of love. Men need to know not only God's power but also God's steadfast love. "Power without Love is brutality, and Love without Power is weakness" (Perowne).

According to his work. The psalm closes with a universal axiom. When a man is rewarded for well-doing, it is of God's mercy, for no man of himself deserves a reward.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 MYP 81
5 GW 99; MB 35; 6T 354
7 AA 572; DA 413; PP 413
8 SC 97
9 TM 438
10 5T 261

PSALM 63

INTRODUCTION.—David composed Ps. 63 when he was in the Wilderness of Judah, a fugitive from the wrath of King Saul (see superscription; cf. 1 Sam. 23:13, 14, 23, 24; Sam. 24:1–3; Ed 164). Ps. 63 is one of the tenderest of the psalms. It contains nothing by way of petition; there is joy, praise, thanksgiving, longing for communion with God, but not a word of request for temporal or spiritual advantage. The hymn has three parts: David's hunger for God (vs. 1–4), his joy in communion with God (vs. 5–8), his confidence in the ultimate destruction of the wicked and his own triumph in the hands of God (vs. 9–11).

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Early will I seek. Heb. *shachar*, "to seek at dawn," hence, "to seek earnestly," or "to seek eagerly."

My soul. Used idiomatically for "I" (see on Ps. 16:10).

Thirsteth. See on Ps. 42:2.

Longeth. Or, "faints with longing."

2. Thy power and thy glory. David seems to call to mind the evidences of God's presence in the services of the sanctuary, such as the Shekinah (see PP 349). The greatest evidence of God's presence today is the transformation of human lives.

3. Better than life. To David, the realization of God's love was sweeter than life, which a man generally considers his most valuable possession.

4. Thus. That is, "consequently," or "accordingly."

Bless. Heb. *barak*. This word reflects several shades of meaning. When God blesses a person, it means that God endows him with salutary gifts, or declares the person to be so endowed. When a man blesses God, it means that he acknowledges God as the dispenser

of salutary gifts. In the OT men are frequently said to bless God (see Ps. 63:4; 103:1, 2, 20–22; 145:2; etc.). When a person blesses another person, he expresses the wish that that person may be endowed with salutary gifts. In the LXX, *barak* is usually rendered *eulogeo*, "to speak well of." Infrequently *barak* is used to express an opposite meaning, "to curse" (see on Job 1:5).

Lift up my hands. See on Ps. 28:2; see also Ps. 134:2.

5. Shall be satisfied. See on Ps. 36:8. Whereas in v. 1 the figure was that of water refreshing the thirsty, here it is of food satisfying the hungry.

6. Upon my bed. That is, during the night. At such a time the difficulties of the day tend to be magnified. David doubtless spent much time thinking about God during the anxious nights in the wilderness. We would do well to turn our thoughts toward God during our sleepless hours.

In the night watches. The night was commonly divided into three watches (see Lam. 2:19; 1 Sam. 11:11). Doubtless David found it hard to sleep when pursued, yet he was sufficiently tranquil to spend his sleepless hours in meditation.

7. Because. God's past benefits are always a reason for present gratitude and an assurance of future help.

Shadow of thy wings. See on Ps. 17:8; see also Ps. 36:7; 57:1; 61:4.

8. Followeth hard. Heb. *dabaq*, "to cleave to," "to cling to" (see on Deut. 4:4; 10:20; cf. Gen. 2:24).

9. But those. The psalmist contrasts the fate of his enemies with his own future under God's leadership. Those who plan to destroy the psalmist will perish. God's right hand lovingly upholds the righteous. That same right hand will destroy the wicked.

10. By the sword. Literally, "by the hands of the sword." "Sword" is personified, pictured as having hands.

11. The king. The psalmist now refers to himself in the third person. Though a fugitive, in momentary danger of being killed by Saul, David still manifests his confidence that ultimately he will become king in fulfillment of his anointing by the prophet Samuel (see 1 Sam. 16:13). There is a tender pathos in David's use of the term. His words represent an act of faith on his part.

By him. That is, by God. On the significance of the oath see on Deut. 6:13; see also Deut. 10:20; Isa. 65:16.

That speak lies. Those who seek to triumph by falsehood will be confounded. David is confident that he will be protected against the murderous designs of Saul and that his enemies will be destroyed. It is the privilege of the man who puts his trust in God to realize that ultimate joy and triumph are sure to be his.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–7Ed 164
3–7MH 101
8 Te 105

PSALM 64

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 64 is a forceful picture of evil men plotting against the psalmist's life (see Ps. 52; 57 to 59). The psalm has two main divisions: a petition for deliverance from the enemies (vs. 1–6) and an expression of confidence and gratitude for their destruction (vs. 7–9). A couplet of encouragement closes the poem (v. 10).

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Prayer. Heb. *śiach*, "concern"; also translated "complaint" (Ps. 55:2).

2. Secret counsel. Or, "confidential talk" (see on Ps. 25:14).

Insurrection. Heb. *rigshah*, "tumult," contrasted with the secret conversations referred to in the first part of the verse.

3. Bitter words. That is, words of malice; the phrase has become common in English. Nothing is more cruel than the attack of a lying tongue.

4. In secret. Literally, "in hiding places" (see Ps. 10:8).

Perfect. Heb. *tam*, "complete," "right," "peaceful" (see on Job 1:1). The psalmist here refers to himself as morally blameless as far as the things of which he is accused are concerned.

Fear not. The enemies of the psalmist are evidently not afraid of either God or man (see Ps. 55:19).

5. Matter. Literally, "word." The language of the wicked plotters is evil.

They say. That is, to themselves.

Who shall see them? They flatter themselves that God pays no attention to them.

6. Search out. They search for and examine every plan that might aid them in accomplishing their wicked purposes.

Diligent search. Verses 2–6 describe the restless activity of the wicked. Aided by the master mind of evil, the unrighteous zealously "search out" iniquity, carefully plan its execution, diligently prepare for action, and suddenly strike when the moment is opportune.

It would be well for the righteous to be as diligent in the practice of righteousness. Too often godliness becomes an entirely passive matter. No growth in grace is discernible, no new exploits for God are planned. The words of Christ are pertinent, "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8).

7. Shall shoot. The psalmist gives evidence of his confidence that God will vindicate his cause.

With an arrow. The tables will be turned. Instead of the psalmist's enemies shooting arrows against others (v. 3), God will shoot His arrows at them.

8. Their own tongue. The instrument that they had used to injure others would be, like a sword (see v. 3), the means of their own destruction.

Shall flee away. According to some authorities, from the Heb. *nadad*, "to retreat," or "to flee"; according to others, from *nud*, "to be shaken to and for," or "to shake oneself [disapprovingly]."

9. Shall wisely consider. They will see evidence that God delivers His children from the machinations of the wicked.

10. Be glad. The psalmist expresses his gratitude for deliverance.

All the upright. All God's people, whether involved in the danger that is the subject of the psalm or not, will rejoice in the triumph of the psalmist.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 4T 348

PSALM 65

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 65 has been called a glorious harvest hymn of praise to God. Its three divisions express praise to God for (1) His moral qualities (vs. 1–4), (2) His power and majesty in nature (vs. 5–8), and (3) the abundant harvest (vs. 9–13). The third section is one of the most exquisite exhibits of idyllic nature poetry in the psalms.

On the superscription see pp. 619, 627.

1. Praise waiteth for thee. Literally, "to thee is silence—praise" (see on Ps. 62:1). "When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God" (DA 363).

Sion. Elsewhere in the OT always "Zion" (see on Ps. 48:2).

2. That hearest. A characteristic of God frequently noted in the psalms (see Ps. 69:33).

All flesh. The psalmist's faith extends beyond Israel, to men of all races and climes (see Ps. 22:27, 28).

3. Iniquities. Literally, "words of iniquities," or "things of iniquities." The psalmist mentions his own guilt before he makes reference to that of his people (see Dan. 9:20).

Shalt purge them away. From the Heb. *kaphar*, commonly translated "to atone for" (Ex. 29:37; etc.; see on Ps. 32:1).

4. Blessed. See on Ps. 1:1.

Dwell in thy courts. It was an Israelite's unique privilege to worship in the sacred courts of the sanctuary. Three times a year all mature Hebrew males were required to come to the sanctuary for the celebration of religious services. Those who lived nearby might have constant access to its courts.

Temple. Heb. *hekal.* The word may refer to either the Temple (of Solomon) or the tabernacle (see on Ps. 5:7).

5. Terrible things. That is, things that inspire men with fear or awe and with a realization of God's power and glory.

Wilt thou answer. For the psalmist's prayer see v. 2.

God of our salvation. See Ps. 27:1; 62:2, 6.

Ends of the earth. As in v. 2, the psalmist includes as beneficiaries all men who recognize God as the only source of confidence (see v. 8).

Upon the sea. Parallel with the preceding phrase (see Ps. 107:23–30). In addition to trusting in winds and sea currents, in navigational ability, and in the sea-worthiness of ships, mariners should trust in God.

6. The mountains. See Ps. 36:6; 95:4. Few things give more sublime concept of God's strength than the contemplation of lofty mountains. The Alps, the Himalayas, and the Rockies are silent witnesses to the power of God.

Girded. God is figuratively represented as girded with power (see Ps. 93:1), an allusion to the practice of a man's girding himself when about to exert his strength. In Bible lands it is still a common sight to see a man gather in the loose folds of his outer garments and tuck them under his belt so that he will be unhampered in the task that he is about to perform.

7. Stilleth. God's power in quieting the storm is especially significant to men, who have no control over the sea. The OT writers frequently refer to this manifestation of God's power (see Job. 38:8–11; Isa. 50:2; 51:10; cf. Matt. 8:23–27; Mark. 4:36–41).

Noise. Heb. *sha'on*, "din," or "roar."

Tumult of the people. The waters and the people are frequently mentioned together (see Isa. 17:12; cf. Isa. 8:7; Rev. 17:15).

8. Uttermost parts. Regions far from civilized lands, whose inhabitants may not have known God as it was the privilege of the Hebrews to know Him.

Afraid at thy tokens. They are awe-struck by the evidences of God's power in the forces of nature (see Rom. 1:19, 20; DA 638). Reverence is becoming to those who see in nature the glory of God.

Outgoings. Literally, "goings forth," "places of departure," or "risings." Perhaps the poet has in mind the splendid pictures of sunrise and sunset. Happy the man who finds his delight in nature, and is led to nature's God.

9. Thou visitest the earth. God is adored as the Giver of an abundant harvest. In the beautiful verses of this section of the psalm (vs. 9–13) the psalmist adores God for His bountiful providence in the harvest, tracing the various steps in the processes of nature, until the glorious culmination is reached. The verses are a graphic description of the hills and valleys of Palestine, terraced tier on tier, and covered with olives, vines, and expanses of wheat, barley, and millet. Especially because of this section of the poem, Ps. 65 has been called The Farmer's Psalm. Nature is not celebrated for its own sake, but only as it points to God.

Waterest. Compare Job 36:27, 28; 37:6; Job 38:26–28.

River of God. A reference to the abundance of water provided. God's reservoir of water in the heavens is always full.

Corn. Heb. *dagan*, "grain," a generic term which includes any grain commonly used for making bread.

Hast so provided. God prepares the earth for the harvest and then gives the harvest. The harvest depends upon the preparation of the ground and upon the rain, and both depend upon God. God follows the order of things that He has ordained, working through natural law.

10. Ridges. Elsewhere, "furrows" (see Job 31:38, 39:10).

Settlest. Literally, "makest level," or "causest to go down."

Furrows. Rather, "clods." The Hebrew text contains the idea that the rain falls on the clods between the furrows and levels the ground.

The springing thereof. The vegetation that springs from the soil under the blessing of the rain.

11. Thou crownest. The beauty and abundance of flowers, fruits, and grain are like a crown on the head of the year.

12. They drop. That is, with the "fatness" shed from God.

Wilderness. Not necessarily the desolate desert, but an uninhabited region, which may produce wild grasses and flowers and shrubs to some extent.

Rejoice on every side. Literally, "are girded with joy." The hills, covered with vines and trees, are personified as girded with happiness.

13. Valleys. The arable and fertile valley lands are clothed with waving grain (see on v. 9), as the hills are clothed with flocks.

Shout. As a climax of personification, the meadows in the valleys, rich with undulating grain, shout and sing for the very joy of being. All nature rejoices in God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5 PK 133; 8T 41

5–7MH 418
5–118T 275
6 DA 20; GC 66
8 MH 418
8–13PK 133
9–11COL 81
11 Ed 43; MH 418

PSALM 66

INTRODUCTION.—In Ps. 66, David (see 4T 533) merges personal thanksgiving into general thanksgiving in celebration of deliverance from some great personal or national calamity. The psalm was probably composed to be sung before sacrifice in performance of a vow that the psalmist had made when he was in distress (see v. 13–15). The five stanzas and closing doxology of the psalm have a remarkable peculiarity: vs. 1–12 employ the plural number in the use of the first personal pronoun; vs. 13–20, the singular number. Perhaps the poet, after having spoken for the whole congregation, continues by speaking of himself as a member of the congregation. Or, perhaps vs. 1–12 were to be sung by the choir of Levites; vs. 13–20, by a solo voice. This psalm was often sung by Christ (see EGW, Supplementary Material, on vs. 1–5).

On the superscription see p. 627.

1. Make a joyful noise. See on Ps. 98:6.

2. Honour. Heb. *kabod*, also meaning "glory," and appropriately so rendered here (see Ps. 62:7; 72:19).

Name. See on Ps 5:11; 7:17.

3. Terrible. God's deliverances of the persecuted are terrible to the persecutors (see on Ps. 65:5; cf. Rev. 15:3).

Submit themselves. Heb. *kachash*, "to feign obedience," "to cringe" (see Ps. 18:44). The submission referred to here is hollow, insincere, feigned; induced only by the show of God's power. True submission of heart is induced by the revelation of God's love.

4. All the earth. See on Ps. 22:27.

Name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17.

Selah. See on p. 629.

5. Come and see. See on Ps. 46:8.

6. He turned the sea. A reference to the crossing of the Red Sea (see Ex. 14:21, 22; Ex. 15:1–21).

Through the flood. A reference to the crossing of the Jordan (see Joshua 3:14–17). With poetic license the psalmist unites this epic episode with that of the Red Sea crossing in one grand picture of God's interposition for Israel.

Did we rejoice. The joy of the Hebrews was expressed in song (see Ex. 15:1–21).

7. Behold. God is continually keeping watch to see how the nations behave (see on Ps. 11:4; see PK 535, 536). He is jealous for His people, and will not permit them to be crushed by the enemy.

"… Behind the dim unknownStandeth God within the shadow,keeping watch above his own."
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL,"The Present Crisis."

The rebellious. Those who are impatient under God's restraint, or who defy God. These should not be lifted up with pride, for they must eventually submit to God's power.

Selah. See on p. 629.

8. Ye people. Or, "O ye peoples"; the Hebrew is plural, evidently referring to the nations.

Verses 8–12 constitute the third stanza, the heart of the psalm, in which the people are invited to praise God for deliverance before uniting with the psalmist in the act of sacrifice (vs. 13–15).

9. Our soul. Here used idiomatically for "us" (see on Ps. 16:10). God's people had been preserved alive despite the danger suffered (see Ps. 3:2; 7:2).

To be moved. See Ps. 121:3; Prov. 3:23, 26.

10. Hast proved. God had allowed calamity to come upon Israel as a test of her loyalty to Him.

As silver is tried. See Zech. 13:9; 1 Peter 1:6, 7; cf. Ps. 12:6. Anciently the refining of silver was a slow process. Israel had suffered long.

11. Into the net. As wild animals are trapped in a snare (see Hosea 7:12).

Affliction. God never allows His people to be tried beyond their strength (see 1 Cor. 10:13). This verse may allude to the affliction of bondage in Egypt.

12. Men. Heb. *'enosh*, "man in his frailty" (see on Ps. 8:4; 9:19).

Ride over our heads. A figure, perhaps derived from the ancient custom of Oriental conquerors victoriously riding over the bodies of the conquered.

Through fire and through water. This phrase, now part and parcel of the English language, is a graphic representation of the many dangers to which men are exposed.

Wealthy place. Heb. *rewayah*, "abundance [of drink]." *Rewayah* occurs elsewhere only in Ps. 23:5, where it is translated "runneth over" (literally, "an overflowing"). Perhaps the idea of "abundance" is intended, and the psalmist is asserting that God has brought the Israelites into a state of abundance. The LXX has *anapsuche*, as if from the Heb. *rewachah*, meaning "relief," "respite." If *rewachah* is the correct reading, then there is perhaps an allusion to the relief experienced when the children of Israel reached the Promised Land.

13. Burnt offerings. See Vol. I, pp. 698–700; cf. Isa. 1:11.

Verses 13–15 form the fourth stanza. The change of pronouns here illustrated is common in Hebrew literature.

Vows. The promises that David had made (see on Ps. 22:25; Ps. 50:14). The Mosaic law had regulations concerning various kinds of vows (see Lev. 27:1–8; see on Lev. 27:9–30; Num. 6:2–21).

14. Have uttered. The lips opened under the influence of deep emotion.

In trouble. Especially in times of trouble men are prone to make promise to God (see Judges 11:30, 31; 1 Sam. 1:11). How careful they should be to keep these promises! How often they forget them, when health and prosperity return.

15. Burnt sacrifices of fatlings. That is, of fatted animals suitable for sacrifice.

Bullocks with goats. Both were required in the worship prescribed by Moses (on the use of these animals in sacrifices, see Vol. I, pp. 698–703).

Selah. See on p. 629.

16. All ye that fear God. David was willing to bear witness to God's goodness before all, whether they were his countrymen or not (see on 2 Sam. 15:18).

Verses 16–19 are the fifth stanza. David calls on all faithful worshipers of God to recognize with him that God answers the prayers of those who are sincere and honest.

I will declare. David speaks for himself, and may well have spoken for the people whose king and leader he was.

My soul. Used idiomatically for "me" (see on Ps. 16:10).

18. If I regard iniquity. An axiom in Christian experience. In order for prayer to be acceptable to God, it must be coupled with a purpose to forsake all known sin (see Prov. 28:9; Isa. 1:15; 58:3–5; cf. Ps. 34:15; John 9:31; James 4:3; SC 99, 100; PP 584). "When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service, and He makes up for the deficiency with His own divine merit" (EGW ST June 16, 1890).

19. God hath heard. David did not doubt the answer to his prayer; he expressed his assurance of God's approval (see Ps. 116:1, 2).

20. Hath not turned away. Our God is a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God (see Ps. 65:2; 1T 120, 121).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

12 MH 486
13, 14 4T 471
16 6T 227; 8T 182
17, 18 4T 533
18 MH 227; PP 329; 1T 214; 2T 148, 158, 350, 351; 3T 238, 249; 4T 332; 5T 592

PSALM 67

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 67 is a call to all the peoples of the earth to rejoice in the God and King of the world, to put their trust in Him, and to understand His universal government. Some have suggested that the psalm is a formal response of the congregation to the Aaronic blessing (Num. 6:24–26), especially appropriate at the time of the gathering in of the harvest.

On the superscription see pp. 627, 629.

1. God be merciful. The thought and language of this verse are an echo of the blessing of the high priest (see Num. 6:24–26). For other phrases similar to expressions found in the Aaronic blessing, see Ps. 4:6; 31:16; 80:3, 7, 19.

Upon us. Literally, "with us." The phrase is suggestive of intimate fellowship with God.

Selah. See p. 629.

2. Thy way. The methods and principles of the government of God, in relation not only to Israel but to all the world. God intended that Israel should be the light of the world. How different would have been the history of Israel had she fulfilled her high calling (see DA 577). In Israel's experience lies a lesson for the remnant church.

Saving health. Heb. *yeshu'ah*, usually translated "salvation"; but also rendered "welfare" (Job 30:15); "help" (Ps. 3:2; Ps. 42:5); "deliverance" (Ps. 18:50; 44:4; Isa. 26:18); "helping" (Ps. 22:1); and "health" (Ps. 42:11).

Among all nations. A call to mission service. God has placed upon the church the responsibility of bringing a knowledge of salvation to all nations.

3. Let the people praise thee. This verse is the refrain of the poem. The same refrain occurs again in v. 5.

4. Judge. God's government is a government of righteous judgment. In righteousness He rules the world.

Govern. Heb. *nachah*, "to lead," or "to guide." God is the great Shepherd of all peoples (see Ps. 23:3). *Nachah* is used of God's guiding Israel through the wilderness (see Ps. 78:14). As God led Israel, He will lead all peoples who accept Him as their Shepherd.

5. Let the people. The repetition of the refrain (see on v. 3) emphasizes the psalmist's expressed desire that all men—not only Israel of the flesh—should praise God for His goodness to them.

6. Shall the earth yield. Or, "the earth yielded." The language may be interpreted as referring to the recent harvest in all its abundance. From this brief reference to the harvest some have concluded that the psalm is a harvest thanksgiving.

Our own God. The phrase expresses an intimacy of fellowship with God.

Shall bless. The clause may also be translated as the expression of a wish: "May God, our own God, bless us!"

7. God shall bless us. The psalm closes with an expression of the same longing for God's blessing with which it opened. Through Israel all the world was to be blessed. In a knowledge of Israel's God as the God of all nations the world would share in God's blessing upon Israel. A full appreciation of this psalm is possible only with deep appreciation of God's eternal purpose in calling Israel as His chosen people. It is essentially a missionary psalm, and should be precious to the church in its worldwide mission program.

That the psalm was intended for use in public worship seems evident from its reference to the Aaronic blessing, the use of the refrain, and the abundance of words common to public worship, such as "praise" and "bless."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 Ev 357; 9T 47
2 COL 299
3 5T 319
5 PP 290

PSALM 68

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 68 celebrates the Lord's victorious leadership of Israel from the time of the Exodus to the days of the psalmist. It depicts in striking details Israel's journey through the desert, the conquest of Canaan, the flight of hostile kings, and the final establishment of Jerusalem as the religious center of the nation. The Messianic tone of at least a portion of Ps. 68 is attested by Paul's quotation in Eph. 4:8. Portions of Ps. 68 were often sung by Christ (see EGW, Supplementary Material, on Ps. 66:1–5).

Because of the many unique words and phrases in its stanzas, Ps. 68 has posed numerous problems of interpretation. In 1851 Eduard Reuss published a little book in which he brought together materials from 400 commentaries that had been written on this psalm in the course of time. Since then, it is claimed, at least another 400 commentaries have appeared. However, the only real progress toward a better understanding of this psalm has come since the discovery of Ugaritic literature (see p. 618). This literature has also proved that a very ancient terminology was used by the psalmist. W. F. Albright and T. H. Robinson think that the psalm is a collection of opening stanzas of numerous famous hymns.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Let God arise. See on Ps. 3:7. Ps. 68 opens with a series of statements similar to the expressions of the formula used "when the ark set forward" in the wilderness (Num. 10:35). Solomon used similar phraseology when the ark was deposited in the Temple (2 Chron. 6:41).

2. As smoke. The figures in this verse express the utter weakness of the enemies before God's power (see Ps. 37:20; 97:5; Hosea 13:3; Micah 1:4). The last part of v. 2 and the first part of v. 3 show a degree of similarity to the last verse of Deborah's song (see Judges 5:31).

3. Be glad. The call to rejoice is emphasized by threefold repetition. Verse 3 closes the introduction to this joyous song of victory.

4. Extol. From the Heb. *salal*, which has the basic meaning, "to lift up," "to exalt."

That rideth upon the heavens. The Heb. *rokeb ba'araboth* has presented many difficulties of interpretation. The KJV translation "heavens" for *'araboth* is remarkable inasmuch as in every other instance *'arabah* apparently means "desert." However, in Ugaritic, where *'arabah* is spelled with a *p* instead of a *b,* the word means "clouds." The Ugaritic vowelless term *rkb 'rpt*, "rider of the clouds," is a frequently occurring epithet of Baal. Thus by their rendering "heavens," the translators of the KJV came remarkably close to what is now believed to be a true definition of the term.

Jah. Heb. *Yah*, a short form for *Yahweh* (see Ex. 6:3; Vol. I, pp. 171–173; see on Ex. 15:2). This is the only occurrence of the English short form "Jah" in the KJV.

5. A father. God reveals His character to men by His deeds of beneficence. The more intimately men associate with Him, the more keenly they become aware of His gracious care for His children. Christ "pitched His tent by the side of the tents of men, that He might dwell among us, and make us familiar with His divine character and life" (DA 23).

The phrase "a father of orphans and judge of widows" appears twice in Ugaritic texts describing an ancient righteous king.

6. God setteth the solitary. The picture may be that of a poor bachelor who has no money to pay for a bride (cf. Jacob; Gen. 29:18) and so could not marry. God cares for him and helps him to found a family. The figure finds a parallel in Ugaritic, where the statement appears, "the house of the unmarried is closed."

Chains. Heb. *kosharoth*, a word occurring only here in the OT. The KJV translation "chains" is questionable. Recent commentators suggest the meaning "happiness," or "prosperity." In Ugaritic the word means "female singers," so that the phrase may be translated, "leads out prisoners under [the accompaniment of] singers."

7. When thou wentest forth. This verse introduces the glorious theme of the psalm. Here begins a galaxy of allusions to the triumphal march of Israel through the wilderness to Canaan, God ever leading the way. The historic retrospect extends through v. 18.

Selah. See p. 629.

8. Dropped. Usually taken from the Heb. *nataph*, "to drop," "to drip." However, it is probably derived from *ṭapap*, "to toss," Arabic *ṭaffa*, "to flap the wings," and Aramaic *ṭpṭp*, "to flicker." In this way a perfect parallel to the first line is obtained. "The earth shook, the heavens tossed."

Even Sinai. Although God's presence was continually manifested during the long wilderness journey, His glorious majesty was especially shown at Sinai (see Ex. 19:16–18; PP 339, 340).

The Heb. *zeh Sinay*, usually rendered "this Sinai," has been recognized by H. Grimme as an old title of Jehovah, and can be translated "the One of Sinai."

9. A plentiful rain. Perhaps an allusion to the manna, which God is said to have "rained down" (Ps. 78:24).

10. Congregation. Heb. *chayyah*, "flock." God is Israel's tender Shepherd (see on Ps. 23:1).

Poor. Descriptive of God's flock during the time they wandered in the desert, wholly dependent on God.

11. Gave the word. Verses 11–14 allude to the conquest of Canaan.

Those that published. Heb. *mebaśśeroth*, "announcers," from the verb *baśar*, "to announce." The form is feminine plural, and hence refers to women announcers. In the setting of the psalm the *mebaśśeroth* were probably groups or companies of women singers such as celebrated great events, for example, the return of victorious armies (see 1 Sam. 18:6, 7, see on Ex. 15:20, 21).

12. Kings. Canaanitish kings (see Joshua 24:11–13).

Did flee apace. Or, "they flee, they flee!" a forceful, intensive repetition. When confronted by the might of Israel's God, earthly kings quickly scatter.

13. Lien among the pots. This difficult passage has been made clear by Ugaritic (see p. 618). The Heb. *shephattayim*, translated "pots" in the KJV and "sheepfolds" in the RSV, actually means hearthstones. Ancient homes contained two hearthstones, as do also the homes of many nomad Arabs today. Furthermore, the passage should be translated as a question and connected with the previous verse, "Will ye remain seated by the hearthstones?" The query puts to shame those who, in times of a national emergency, stay at home when great issues are at stake.

Covered with silver. A beautiful image, suggesting the play of sunlight upon the plumage of a dove in flight. Several words and phrases used here find close parallels in Ugaritic. However, the purpose of the picture of this flying dove in the context of this psalm is obscure.

14. Scattered kings. Evidently a reference to the discomfiture of the kings of Canaan when Joshua invaded the land (Joshua 10:10, 11).

Snow in Salmon. God scattered kings as the snow disappears from Mt. Zalmon. A Mt. Zalmon, a hill near Shechem, is mentioned in Judges 9:48. This hill almost never has snow, being only about 3,000 ft. high. More likely the "Salmon" here is Jebel Haur*f*n, east of the Sea of Galilee, the Asalmanos of Ptolemy. Its peaks of 6,000 ft. are snow covered nearly every winter.

15. Hill of God. Heb. *har–'Elohim*, literally, "mountain of God," idiomatically, "mighty mountain" (see RSV).

Hill of Bashan. Bashan was a high plateau region east of the Sea of Chinnereth (see Palestine during the Period of the Judges).

16. Why leap ye? Rather, "Why look you with envy?" (RSV). The lofty ranges are described as being envious of the hills of Jerusalem. God honored Zion by choosing to place His Temple there (see Ps. 132:13–16).

17. Twenty thousand. This expression may also be rendered "myriads." The thought is that the angels form a numberless host.

Angels. Heb. *shin'an*, here conjecturally rendered "angels." Most commentators consider *shin'an* to be derived from the root *shanah*, "to repeat," and thus to mean "repetitions." The word appears in Ugaritic as *tnn*, "warrior," and should probably be so translated here. The reference would then be to the warriors of God, the angelic host, as in the KJV.

As in Sinai. God Himself, attended by the heavenly hosts, carrying with Him all the majesty and glory that were displayed at Sinai, is now established in Mt. Zion. What a glorious conclusion to the historic retrospect!

18. Thou hast ascended. The psalmist employs the figure of a conquering monarch returning victoriously, with a multitude of captives, to describe the heavenly King going up to Jerusalem. There may be here a special reference to the bringing up of the ark (2 Sam. 6:17). Paul picks up the figure of the psalmist and applies it to the ascension of Christ (Eph. 4:8).

Gifts for men. Rather, "gifts among men." Receiving on God's part implies giving; He gives in order to receive. "Through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all" (DA 21).

Lord God. Heb. *Yah 'Elohim* (see on v. 4).

The description of the triumphal procession is here interrupted with an ascription of praise, and the description is not resumed till v. 24.

19. Loadeth us. The Hebrew verb suggests "carrying like a shepherd," or "bearing a burden" (see Zech. 12:3).

Selah. See p. 629.

20. Issues. Literally, "outgoings," or "escapes." The word for "salvation" is literally, "salvations," emphasizing the multitude of specific instances of salvation, rather than the mere abstract idea.

21. Hairy scalp. The top of the head, a vital part of the body. Death is the inevitable penalty for sin that is willfully indulged in.

22. I will bring again. God will find the wicked wherever they may try to hide, and will punish them (see Amos 9:1–3). Note that the words "my people" are supplied. The reference is evidently not to God's people but to the sinners mentioned in v. 21.

Bashan. See on v. 15.

23. Dipped in the blood. A figure describing the destruction of the foes (see on Ps. 58:10).

Dogs. See on 1 Kings 21:23.

24. They have seen. The picture of the triumphal march is resumed.

25. Timbrels. Possibly a type of drum (see p. 30).

26. Bless ye God. This verse is probably the song sung by the women mentioned in v. 25.

27. Little. Heb. *ṣa'ir*, meaning also "young," or "low." The adjective refers to the ruler of Benjamin, probably Saul. The passage should be rendered, "There is Benjamin, the least rules them."

Benjamin. Four tribes are mentioned in this verse. Mt. Zion was on the border between Benjamin and Judah. Zebulun and Naphtali may have been used to represent the tribes at the extreme distance from Mt. Zion (see Palestine during the Period of the Judges; cf. Judges 5:18).

Their council. Heb. *rigmah*. The word is obscure. Commentators explain it to mean "crowd of people," "cry," or "noise of weapons."

28. Commanded thy strength. The psalmist appears to entreat God to make full display of His power, and even to make that display still more impressive in the contingencies ahead.

29. Thy temple. Heb. *hekal* (see on Ps. 65:4).

30. Rebuke. See Ps. 9:5.

Company of spearmen. Rather "wild beast of the reeds," perhaps used symbolically of Egypt, a leading world power at that time.

31. Princes. Heb. *chashemannim*, a loan word from the Egyptian *ḥsmn*, meaning "natron," "copper," or "bronze." Natron was a famous article of export from Egypt and copper was imported to the Nile country. It is possible that natron, a detergent commonly used in place of soap in ancient times when soap was still unknown, is here designated.

Egypt; Ethiopia. These countries are named as examples of powerful and wealthy nations that will finally seek after God. On the application of this verse to "the beneficent designs of Jehovah for the salvation of the heathen" see PK 370, 371.

32. Sing unto God. The psalm closes with an invitation to all nations to praise the Supreme God who has so gloriously manifested His power and goodness in leading Israel on its triumphal march from Egypt to Mt. Zion. When Christ ascended to His Father, the angels received Him into the heavenly courts singing in triumph the words of vs. 32–34 (see AA 32, 33). Compare also the similar use made of Ps. 24:7–10. See comment there.

Selah. See p. 629.

33. The heavens of heavens. See on v. 4; Deut. 10:14; see also Deut. 33:26.

Voice. See on Ps. 29:3.

34. In the clouds. God's majesty and power are especially shown in the dramatic phenomena of the heavens: thunder, lightning, storm.

35. Thy holy places. From His dwelling place God performs mighty acts which inspire awe, and sometimes fear, in the hearts of all men.

Strength. God's strength is given to His people (see Ps. 29:11; Isa. 40:29). What a blessed thought: to His own children God imparts His strength and thus makes them equal to every situation that may arise (see Matt. 28:18–20).

Power. Literally, "powers." On the force of the plural see on v. 20.

Blessed be God. The contemplation of God's character as depicted in this poem elicits this tribute of praise from the heart of every grateful child of God (see Ps. 66:20).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5 MH 202; WM 216; 2T 314

8 PP 340

10 COL 256; MB 164; WM 15

10, 11 Ev 565
13 COL 206; MH 182
19 CS 17
31 PK 370
32–34 AA 32
35 CH 367

PSALM 69

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 69 is the lament of a man bowed down with grief and tormented by the hostility of his fellows, suffering for the sake of his faith in God. Though the psalmist depicts his own suffering, several passages have been shown by NT writers to have application to Christ, the sinless Sufferer. Paul confirms the Davidic authorship of this psalm (Rom. 11:9).

On the superscription see pp. 616, 628.

1. Save me. Verse 1 strikes the keynote of the psalm.

Waters. Typical of great distress (see on Ps. 32:6; 42:7).

My soul. Used idiomatically for "me" (see on Ps. 16:10).

2. Deep mire. See on Ps. 40:2.

No standing. That is, "no ground to stand on."

Floods. Heb. *shibboleth*, "a flowing stream," translated "channel" in Isa. 27:12. *Shibboleth* is the word that the Ephraimites were unable to pronounce when challenged by Jephthah (see on Judges 12:6).

3. Crying. Heb. *qara'*, not weeping, but calling on God for help.

Dried. From excessive speaking (see on Ps. 22:15).

4. Hate me without a cause. Jesus applied this language to Himself (see John 15:25).

5. My sins. Although the psalmist believes that he is suffering "without a cause" (v. 4) as far as the charges of his enemies are concerned, he nevertheless acknowledges that he is a sinner.

Are not hid. Compare Ps. 139:1–4.

6. For my sake. That is, "on my account." The psalmist pledges to do nothing that would make the faithful children of God ashamed. The principle here enunciated is an excellent motto for worthy Christian conduct. Let us never do anything that would bring dishonor upon the cause of God.

This verse is an excellent example of synonymous parallelism (see p. 24), the two halves having the same basic meaning.

7. For thy sake. The real cause of the enmity was the psalmist's devotion to God. Sinful men despise those who serve God (see MB 53). The conduct of the children of God shames sinners.

Shame. Here referring to the slanderous charges heaped upon the psalmist (see Ps. 44:15, 16).

8. My mother's children. In an economy like that of the Hebrews, children of the same father were frequently only half brothers (see Ps. 50:20).

In the language of this verse, and of vs. 9, 20, Christ foretold, through David, the treatment that He was to receive from men (see AA 225).

9. The zeal of thine house. The sanctuary is the object of the psalmist's zeal. David showed his zeal in bringing the ark to Mt. Zion (see 2 Sam. 6:12–19); in desiring to build

a permanent dwelling for the Lord in Jerusalem (see 2 Sam. 7:2); in collecting structural material for the building which he was not permitted to erect (see 1 Chron. 28:14–18; 29:2–5); and in instructing Solomon respecting the Temple (1 Chron. 28:9–13). When Jesus drove the money-changers and bargaining merchants from the Temple precincts, the disciples remembered that it was written of Him, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (see John 2:17; DA 158; see also AA 225). There is no place for a lackadaisical servant in the service of God.

The reproaches. Paul applied this sentence to Christ, who "pleased not himself" (see Rom. 15:3; cf. Ps. 89:50, 51; Jer. 20:8).

10. With fasting. The psalmist endeavored to discipline himself through self-denial.

To my reproach. The enemies mocked the psalmist because he was trying to be a sincere follower of God (see vs. 7–9).

11. Sackcloth. An indication of repentance and humiliation (see on Ps. 30:11).

Proverb. Heb. *mashal*, "a proverbial saying," or "a mocking saying"; rendered "by-word" in Ps. 44:14.

12. They that sit. Either a reference to magistrates (see on Ruth 4:1), who would then be depicted as joining the rabble in ridiculing the psalmist, or an allusion to idlers loafing by the city gates (see on Ps. 9:14).

Speak against me. The psalmist is the subject of general conversation.

Drunkards. Literally, "drinkers of strong drink." The psalmist is the subject of the satirical, ribald songs of intoxicated men (see Ps. 35:15, 16); he is the butt of their low jests (see Job 30:9).

13. An acceptable time. Literally, "a time of favor" (see Isa. 49:8). The psalmist obviously felt that no time could be more acceptable than the present, when he was being unjustly reproached.

14. Out of the mire. Compare v. 2.

15. Pit. See on Ps. 28:1.

16. Tender mercies. See on Ps. 51:1.

17. Hide not thy face. See on Ps. 4:6; cf. Ps. 13:1; Ps. 30:7.

Hear me speedily. Literally, "answer me quickly." The psalmist doubtless feels that he will perish if he does not have speedy relief.

18. Draw nigh. The psalmist cannot endure forever the sense of distance between himself and God.

My soul. Used idiomatically for "me" (see on Ps. 16:10).

19. Thou hast known. The psalmist finds consolation in his assurance that God knows (see Job 23:10).

20. Reproach. Verses 20, 21 have Messianic application (see Matt. 27:34, 48; DA 746; AA 225; PK 691).

To take pity. Compare Isa. 63:5. In Gethsemane the Saviour longed for sympathy in His suffering (see DA 687, 688). Later He was forsaken of all His disciples (see Matt. 26:56; Mark 14:50). The verse is an expression of supreme loneliness.

The two final clauses of the verse constitute a perfect synonymous parallelism, arranged in interlaced form:

"And I look for some to take pity,
but there was none;
And for comforters,

but I found none."

The pathetic words of this verse are paraphrased in the recitative for tenor, "Thy Rebuke Hath Broken His Heart," in Handel's oratorio *The Messiah*.

21. Gall. Heb. *ro'sh*, "poisonous herb," translated "venom" in Deut. 32:33; "poison" in Job 20:16; and "hemlock" in Hosea 10:4. According to Mark 15:23 the "gall" offered to Jesus was myrrh.

Meat. Heb. *baruth*, "bread of consolation," meaning the food supplied to a mourner by his symphatizers. The use of the word emphasizes the hypocrisy of their action.

Vinegar. For the Messianic fulfillment of the prophecy, see Matt. 27:34, 48; Mark 15:23; John 19:29, 30.

22. Let their table. Verse 22 begins a series of imprecations continuing through v. 28 (on Imprecatory Psalms, see p. 624). Paul quotes vs. 22, 23 to describe the hardened sinners of his day (see Rom. 11:8–10).

23. Be darkened. A figure denoting perplexity (see 2 Cor. 3:14).

24. Pour out. See Ps. 79:6; Jer. 10:25.

25. Habitation. Heb. *tirah*, "encampment," or "enclosure," like the circle of tents of a nomadic tribe, hence any place of abode, a camp, a castle, or a palace. The psalmist prays that the place of abode occupied by his enemies may be empty, and that they may perish. This verse is applied to the office held by Judas (see Acts 1:20).

26. Talk to the grief. That is, they add to the sorrow of the afflicted by defaming his character and by misconstruing his expressions of impatience under trial (see on Ps. 41:5–8). This verse states an additional reason for the psalmist's imprecation.

27. Into thy righteousness. The psalmist prays that sinners may be treated as they deserve, not as if they were righteous.

28. Blotted out. See on Ex. 32:32; cf. Ps. 56:8; Dan. 12:1; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8.

29. But I. The psalmist uses the personal pronoun to introduce a sharp contrast between himself and the enemies mentioned in the preceding verses.

Poor. That is, "afflicted," or "oppressed by misery." As the psalmist prays for the enemies who are proud and lofty to be brought down, so he prays that he who is now in the depths of affliction may be "set … up on high." Like Ps. 22 (see vs. 22–31), Ps. 69 closes with vows of gratitude and expressions of hopeful praise.

30. Name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17.

With a song. This psalm is a fulfillment of the psalmist's vow of praise.

31. Shall please. See on Ps. 40:6–8; 51:16, 17; 1 Sam. 15:22.

Ox or bullock. The most perfect of Levitical sacrifices were not to be compared to the sacrifices of the thankful heart.

32. Humble. Or, "meek," "poor." God's people see the psalmist's deliverance and join him in thanksgiving.

Shall live. That is, shall be encouraged, revived (see Ps. 22:26).

33. The Lord heareth. The psalmist's assurance of deliverance is based on the principle stated in this verse: God cares for the afflicted (see on v. 29), "the poor in spirit" (see Matt. 5:3).

Prisoners. Those who suffer, are made captive, for His sake.

34. Heaven. The call to praise includes the whole creation (see Ps. 96:11; 148).

35. Zion. See on Ps. 2:6; 9:14; 68:16.

Cities of Judah. See on Ps. 51:18.

36. Seed. Or, "descendants" (see Isa. 65:9).

Name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17. The blessings promised to the seed of Abraham will be realized by the spiritual seed of Abraham (see on 2 Sam. 7:13).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

8, 9 AA 225
9 DA 158; MB 53; 4T 396
20 AA 225
20, 21 DA 746; PK 691
30 PK 70; 5T 317

PSALM 70

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 70 differs only slightly from Ps. 40:13–17. It is the cry of a soul in deep distress, perhaps representative of the nation of Israel in its realization of its utter need of God. It has two contrasting stanzas: vs. 1–3 are concerned with the enemies of God; vs. 4, 5, with those who seek Him. It has been suggested that these verses may have been taken from Ps. 40 to form a separate psalm for use in Temple worship. For additional comments on Ps. 70 see on Ps. 40:13–17. The comments below concern only points of difference between the two psalms.

On the superscription see p. 616.

1. Make haste. The phrase is supplied. In the Hebrew the psalm begins abruptly, "O God, to deliver me," suggesting the intensity of the psalmist's distress—as if there is not even sufficient control of emotion over intellect to make the grammatical construction complete.

O God. Heb. *'Elohim*. Ps. 40:13 has *Yahweh* (Vol. I, pp. 170–173).

2. Let them be ashamed. The first clause differs only slightly from Ps. 40:14; the word "together" after "confounded" and the phrase "to destroy it" after "my soul" do not appear in Ps. 70.

3. Turned back. The phrase is milder than the word "desolate" of Ps. 40:15. The phrase "unto me" of Ps. 40:15 does not appear in this verse. This may be an omission suggesting a change from personal to national application.

4. God. Heb. *'Elohim*. Ps. 40:16 has *Yahweh* (see on v. 1).

5. Make haste unto me, O God. Instead of this clause, Ps. 40:17 has "The Lord thinketh upon me." Also, instead of the Heb. *'Adonai*, "Lord" (Ps. 40:17), Ps. 70:5 has *'Elohim*, "God" (see on v. 1). For a discussion of the significance of the various divine names, see Vol. I, pp. 170–173.

O Lord. Heb. *Yahweh*. Ps. 40:17 has *'Elohim*. The profession of confidence in God (vs. 1–4) is here changed to a cry of need, and the tone of the poem closes in a plaintive mood. That this change in names has no special significance is shown by the fact that the change occurs both ways (see on vs. 1, 4).

PSALM 71

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 71 gives counsel to the aged. The prayer of this psalm was called forth by David's realization that advancing years brought unhappiness to the aged, owing, in part, to the intensification of unhappy traits of character (see EGW, Supplementary Material, on Ps. 71:9, 17, 19). "David was deeply moved; he was

distressed as he looked forward to the time when he should be aged. … David felt the necessity of guarding against the evils which attend old age" (1T 423).

1. In thee, O Lord. Compare Ps. 31:1–3, with which Ps. 71:1–3 is, for practical purposes, identical.

3. Thou hast given commandment. See Ps. 44:4; 68:28.

4. The wicked. See Ps. 13:2; 17:13; 41:6, 9, 11; 55:13, 14.

5. Hope. See 1 Tim. 1:1.

Trust. See Ps. 40:4.

6. By thee have I been holden up. Literally, "Upon thee have I braced myself." As a child leans all its weight upon its parent, so David found constant support in God (see Ps. 22:9, 10; Isa. 46:3, 4).

My praise. See Ps. 71:14–16, 22–24; 145:1, 2.

7. Wonder. Heb. *mopheth*, "sign," "token," or "portent."

Thou art my strong refuge. For comment, see on Ps. 18:2.

8. Thy praise. Praise is mingled with the prayer of the first part of the psalm.

9. Cast me not off. See Ps. 51:11.

Old age. His review of his past leads David to look toward the future, especially to that time when old age, "last scene of all, that ends the strange eventful history," comes upon him. In contemplating the vicissitudes of old age, he feels the need of special grace (see 1T 422–424).

Strength faileth. If God was David's "rock" and "fortress" when the psalmist was in the full strength of manhood, God would need to be a greater support when the psalmist faced old age with its physical and mental infirmities. On the glory of old age, see Prov. 16:31.

10. Mine enemies. See on Ps. 3:2; 41:7.

Soul. See on Ps. 16:10.

12. Be not far. See Ps. 22:11, 19; 38:21, 22; 40:13.

13. Let them be confounded. See Ps. 35:4, 26; 40:14.

14. Praise thee more. The psalmist turns to thanksgiving, confident that his supplication is heard.

15. Thy righteousness. See Isa. 45:24, 25; Phil. 3:9.

I know not. God's righteousness and salvation are incalculable (see on Ps. 40:5; cf. Ps. 139:17, 18.

17. Wondrous works. See on Ps. 9:1.

18. Forsake me not. See on v. 9.

Thy strength. Literally, "thy arm"; the instrument, and therefore the symbol, of strength (see Isa. 52:10; Eze. 4:7).

To every one. That is, to the coming generations.

19. Done great things. See Ps. 89:6, 8; cf. Ex. 15:11.

20. Shalt quicken me. Hope for the future is grounded in remembrance of the past.

Depths of the earth. Metaphorically, the extremes of suffering and depression (see Ps. 88:6; 130:1). David expresses a positive assurance that God will rescue him from the depths of distress and set him in a place of security.

21. Shalt increase. In the future God will not only restore but also enlarge His majesty and regal greatness.

22. Psaltery. For a description, see p. 33.

Harp. See p. 34. The mention of psaltery and harp implies public worship, in which these instruments were most commonly used.

Holy One of Israel. Compare Ps. 78:41; 89:18.

24. Thy righteousness. See vs. 15, 16, 19. If there were more talk of God's righteousness, there would be less exalting of our own (see Isa. 64:6).

All the day. See on Ps. 1:2.

They are confounded. David is so certain of the overthrow of the wicked that he speaks of it as already accomplished. Like many of the psalms, Ps. 71 closes in triumph (see Ps. 3:7, 8; 7:17; 26:12; etc.). God leads from darkness up to light.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 PP 413
5 FE 348
5, 6 MH 101; PK 341
6 MH 100
7 CT 537
9 1T 423
9, 12 PK 341
14 ML 327
17, 18 1T 423
18 PK 341
22, 23 4T 71
22–24 MH 101

PSALM 72

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 72 is the portrait of an ideal king in an ideal kingdom, in part, at least, foreshadowing and describing the kingship and kingdom of Christ, the Messiah (see PK 686). It portrays the character of the king and the nature, extent, and permanency of His kingdom. This beautiful descriptive poem, which closes Book Two of the Psalter, was probably composed by David for his son Solomon on his accession to the throne, as an incentive to consecrated rulership. It breathes the spirit of David's last words, as recorded in 2 Sam. 23:1–5. "Glorious are the promises made to David and his house, promises that look forward to the eternal ages, and find their complete fulfillment in Christ" (PP 754); cf. PP 755). Portions of this psalm were often sung by Christ (see EGW, Supplementary Material, on Ps. 66:1–5).

On the superscription see p. 617.

1. Give the king. The psalm opens with a prayer for an ideal king. Solomon's reign would have been a "reign of righteousness" like the one described in this psalm, if he had followed the divinely inspired counsel of his father (see PK 26; cf. superscription to Ps. 72).

Thy judgments. The ideal king will make his decisions according to God's will (see on Deut. 1:17).

2. He shall judge. Or, "may he judge." This verb and the main verbs throughout the psalm may be translated as futures, describing the ideal king, as he shall be; or as optatives, expressing a wish, "may he judge," etc. (see 1 Kings 3:6–9; Isa. 11:2–5; 32:1).

Thy poor. Righteous judgment of the poor, who are often the victims of unjust judgment, implies the impartial administration of justice (see on Deut. 1:17).

3. Peace. Peace will reign in the land as the effect of righteousness (see Isa. 32:15–17). Peace brings material blessings to a country, whereas war spreads desolation. Messiah, the King of righteousness, was to be a King of peace (see Isa. 9:5, 6; 11:9; Zech. 9:10; cf. Heb. 7:2).

4. He shall judge. See on v. 2. Verses 4–8 will have their complete fulfillment in the King of kings (see PP 755).

6. Like rain. The rule of the ideal king, or King Messiah, is like the gentle showers, which make the mown grass spring up again fresh and beautiful (see 2 Sam. 23:3, 4; cf. Deut. 32:2; Isa. 55:10, 11; SC 72; MB 18).

7. Flourish. Literally, "sprout," "bud forth," carrying on the figure of v. 6 (see Ps. 92:13).

8. From sea to sea. See Gen. 15:18; see on Ex. 23:31; cf. Num. 34:3, 6; Ps. 89:25; Zech. 9:10; DA 458.

9. Lick the dust. A figure describing prostration with heads touching the ground, an Oriental symbol of complete submission (see Isa. 49:23). Assyrian bas-reliefs show captives crouching, faces on the ground, groveling at the feet of their conquerors.

10. Tarshish. See on Ps. 48:7.

Sheba. In southeastern Arabia, whence the queen came to visit Solomon (see on 1 Kings 10:1).

On the identification of Sheba and Seba see on Gen. 10:7.

Gifts. Compare 1 Kings 10:10, 25 for fulfillment in Solomon's time.

12. For. The king has merited the submission described in v. 11 because of the justice and mercy of his rule.

14. Redeem. Heb. *ga'al* (see on Ruth 2:20), "to act as a kinsman."

Precious. God will not permit the blood of saints to go unavenged (see 1 Sam. 26:21; 2 Kings 1:13; Ps. 116:15). "Never is the tempest-tried soul more dearly loved by his Saviour than when he is suffering reproach for the truth's sake" (see AA 85, 86).

16. Corn. Grain (see on Ps. 65:9).

Top of the mountains. Many cultivated fields in Palestine were terraced up to the tops of the mountains.

Like Lebanon. A picture of the fields of grain on the high elevations, rustling in the breeze like the swaying cedars on Mt. Lebanon (see on Ps. 29:5).

They of the city Prosperity will abound everywhere, in the open places of the mountains and in cities.

Like grass.. Compare the picture of prosperity in Solomon's time (1 Kings 4:20).

17. Shall endure. This verse will reach its final and complete fulfillment in the reign of Christ over the entire earth (see PP 755).

Shall be blessed. See Gal. 3:14; Eph. 1:3; cf. Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4.

Shall call him blessed. See Matt. 21:9; 23:39; Luke 19:38. This verse describes the ultimate glorification of the Messiah (cf. Matt. 25:31).

18. God of Israel. See on Ps. 41:13. Verses 18, 19 constitute a doxology marking the close of Book Two (see pp. 625, 626).

Wondrous things. Compare Ex. 15:11; Job 5:9; Ps. 86:8, 10.

19. Name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17.

Amen, and Amen. See on Ps. 41:13; cf. 89:52. In the OT repetition of "Amen" with the conjunction is found only in the doxologies of the psalms.

20. Prayers of David. This verse is probably an inscription of identification (a colophon), at the close of Book Two, to designate the fact that there are more Davidic psalms in Books One and Two than in Book Three (which carries the name of David in only one superscription). However, it has been observed that the verse may be interpreted as pertaining only to Ps. 72 in the sense that David had nothing more to pray for in that connection at that time.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–19PK 26, 27
2 5T 31
3 GC 66
4 PK 686; WM 312
4–8PP 755
6 MB 18; SC 72
8 DA 458
12 COL 173; GW 263
14 AA 86
17 PP 755
18, 19 PK 314

BOOK THREE

PSALM 73

Like Ps. 37, Ps. 73, deals with the conflict existing in the mind of the one who observes that in this life apparently the wicked prosper and the righteous are persecuted. But Ps. 73 goes further in its solution than Ps. 37. Ps. 73 takes us beyond the present life into an eternity of glory, where man will find the ultimate solution and his ultimate satisfaction in the presence of God.

As in many of the psalms, the conclusion is stated first; thereafter, the poem is about equally divided between statement of the problem and its solution. In his perplexity the psalmist has practically given up God. His analysis of the problem and his endeavor to solve it are fruitless until he goes into the sanctuary. There he finds a satisfactory answer. The poem closes with an expression of his complete confidence in the salvation of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked. In this psalm the poet has given an eloquent plea for sincere participation in divine service as the place where we may expect to receive an answer to the questions that perplex our souls.

Like the book of Job, the psalm teaches a lesson of forbearance toward the one who honestly doubts. The psalmist believed in the righteousness of God, but he could not understand its application to human needs. Honestly searching for an answer to the problem, he emerged into the light of triumphant faith.

On the authorship of the psalm see EGW, Supplementary Material, on Ps. 77:7, 10–12.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 627.

1. Truly. Heb. *'ak* (see on Ps. 62:1). *'Ak* appears also in v. 13 (translated "verily"), and in v. 18 (translated "surely").

God is good. Despite appearances to the contrary.

"Yet, in the maddening maze of things, And tossed by storm and flood, To one fixed trust my spirit clings; I know that God is good!"
WHITTIER, *The Eternal Goodness.*

This is the conclusion to which the psalmist has come, after a period of great perplexity. The psalm explains how he reached this conclusion.

Of a clean heart. Or, "of a pure heart" (see Ps. 24:4; 51:10; 73:13; Matt. 5:8).

2. But as for me. The phrase concentrates our attention upon the psalmist and the experiences through which he passed in arriving at the solution of the problem of the psalm: Why do bad men prosper, and good men suffer?

Were almost gone. A striking metaphor, meaning that the psalmist had almost lost his faith (see Ps. 44:18).

Well nigh slipped. See Ps. 17:5. The psalmist had been on the verge of slipping from the rock of faith into the pit of skepticism.

3. Envious. See on Ps. 37:1. Such envy reveals a spirit that attaches more importance to the things of this world than to the favor of God.

Prosperity. Literally, "peace."

4. Bands. Or "pangs." To the psalmist it seemed that the wicked do not suffer the pangs of death, but that they come to a peaceful end (see Job 21:13, 23).

Firm. Better, "fat."

5. Trouble. They seem to escape what is recognized as the common lot of men (see Job 5:7).

As other men. From the Heb. *'enosh*, "man in his frailty" (see on Ps. 8:4).

Like other men. From the Heb. *'adam*, "mankind" (see on Ps. 8:4).

6. Chain. Better, "necklace," as adornment (see Prov. 1:9; 3:22).

As a garment. Violence (see Gen. 6:11) is as habitual with them as their clothing (see Ps. 109:18, 19).

7. Fatness. Not weakened by toil, as other men are are, they grow fat from high living.

They have. They have whatever they wish. They have only to wish for something, and that wish is gratified; gratification surpasses expectation.

8. Oppression. This verse may be translated, "They are corrupt, and speak wickedly; concerning oppression they speak loftily." What a picture of the lofty air assumed by the wicked!

9. Against the heavens. Or, "in the heavens," by which may be meant, "They talk as if they were in the heavens." The phrase is balanced with "through the earth" (literally, "in the earth") in the second clause of the synonymous parallelism. They talk with an assumed authority. They keep busy going everywhere speaking "wickedly" (v. 8).

10. His people. The exact meaning of this verse is not clear. The LXX gives a different reading: "Therefore my people shall return hither, and full days shall be found for them." The RSV obtains its reading by a change of the Hebrew text. The Hebrew as it stands has been variously interpreted, some taking the pronoun "his" to refer to God, others to the wicked man. If the righteous are the subject of the verse, "return hither" may refer to a return to the problem highlighted in the psalm; if the wicked are the subject, the phrase describes the wicked returning to consort with their wicked leader.

11. How doth God know? See Ps. 10:4, 11, 13; 14:1.

12. Who prosper. Compare Job 21:7–15.

13. Verily. Heb. *'ak* (see on v. 1).

In vain. In view of the psalmist's observations (vs. 3–12), he feels that there is no advantage in his being pure before God (see Job 9:27–31).

Washed my hands. Symbolic of innocence or purity (see Job 9:30).

14. Plagued. The psalmist had previously claimed that the wicked are not "plagued" (v. 5).

Every morning. The psalmist's reproof came with the return of every new day (see Job 7:18).

15. If I say. Rather, "if I had said," perhaps, to himself. Here begins the triumph of faith.

I will speak thus. If I should express all that I think.

I should offend. I should have hurt them, should have been untrue to them, should have put a stumbling block in their way. Therefore, the psalmist preferred to remain silent. Sublime reticence (see James 3:2)!

16. Too painful. The psalmist pondered the problem, seeking to explain the apparent injustice in God's government, but the end result was only perplexity; the problem was too deep for him to solve.

17. Until. The problem is about to find solution.

The sanctuary. The psalmist ceased his endeavors to reason his way through to a solution of the problem, and went into the sanctuary (see 2 Kings 19:14). The real problems of life are solved only in communion with God.

Understood I. In the quietness of the sanctuary the psalmist's doubts melted away. God gave him the real solution to the problem. Among other things, he learned that he had lost in his perspective and had exaggerated the prosperity of the wicked.

Their end. However prosperous the wicked may appear may appear to be, their position is precarious. They have no sure foothold, and may go down at any moment. The argument is even more forceful when applied to the ultimate annihilation of the wicked (Rev. 20:9, 14, 15).

18. Destruction. That which restores the psalmist's faith is his recognition of the end of the wicked in this world, of their downfall in the midst of their prosperity. Loss of perspective had kept the psalmist from seeing the retribution that often came upon the wicked, until he went into the sanctuary and cast himself wholly upon God. He had forgotten that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire from heaven; that Pharaoh's land was ruined by the plagues and his armies were drowned in the sea.

19. As in a moment. The prosperity of wicked men, or of wicked governments, often collapses in a moment. The problem set forth in the psalm is solved only in a view of the end of the wicked, which may come at any moment.

With terrors. Calamities that bring them terror (see Job 18:11; 24:17; 27:20).

20. As a dream. Prosperity is like a dream (see Isa. 29:7, 8); reality returns when the sleeper awakes.

Their image. In the calm of eternity God will pay no attention to the dreams of human existence on earth; eternity will deal with those elements that constitute the real character of man.

21. Thus. Or, "for." The reason for his failure to find the solution to the problem lay in the fact that he was unable to consider the matter calmly. He "was grieved," literally, "was soured," the Hebrew word being used of leavening (see Ex. 12:34, 39). His heart had lost its sweetness, as if under the action of a ferment. Depressed spirits impair man's

judgment. The psalmist frankly acknowledges his error in endeavoring to solve the problem in an embittered state of mind, according to appearances, and not according to eternal values.

Reins. See on Ps. 7:9.

22. Foolish. Compare Ps. 92:6; Prov. 30:2. The psalmist did not understand the case.

I. The Hebrew pronoun has the emphatic initial position in the verse.

Before thee. The psalmist's folly would have been bad enough had he been alone, but it was utterly reprehensible under the eye of God (see Ps. 51:4).

23. I. The emphatic initial position as in v. 22. Although I complain and doubt God's justice, yet God is with me; He will not drive me from His presence.

In vs. 23–28 the psalmist express the final solution to the problem of the psalm. That solution is in God, and in the consciousness of His presence and His guidance in this life and in the life everlasting. It is scarcely possible to express to express the sublime beauty of this exquisite passage, both in thought and in diction.

My right hand. Compare Ps. 18:35; 63:8.

24. With thy counsel. The psalmist recognizes God's guidance, according to the divine plan for his life in this present world. Because he had failed to look to God for guidance and counsel, he had almost succumbed to doubt (see Ps. 48:14).

Afterward. When this life is finished.

To glory. The poet here suggests his confidence in a future life. In the glory of heaven there will be no room for doubt. The glory, the true splendor, of the eternal life is contrasted with the "image," the "dream," the "vain show," of the wicked man's existence.

25. In heaven. There is no one in heaven who can be compared with God. No one "can be to me what God is" (Barnes).

None upon earth.. God is all-sufficient. All my happiness centers in Him. This intimacy of devotion is one of the cardinal teachings of the book of Psalms (see Ps. 42:1, 2; 63:1).

26. Strength. Literally, "rock."

Portion. Not friends, or honor, or wealth, or any earthly thing, but God was the source of the psalmist's happiness. God was his all in all. Prompted by this verse, Charles Wesley (1707–88), on his deathbed, dictated to his wife one of his 6,500 hymns, in which appear the words: "Jesus, … strength of my failing flesh and heart."

27. Far from thee. To be with God is life; to be far from Him is death. The psalmist's realization of this fact solved the problem of God's dealings with men (see vs. 3–12).

Go a whoring. God's relation to His people is frequently compared to that of marriage (see Ps. 45; Jer. 3:8, 9, 14; 5:7; 13:27; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25; James 4:4). When God's children are estranged from Him, they are unfaithful to their marriage vows. The phrase "a whoring" consists of the preposition "a" and the verbal noun "whoring."

28. Draw near to God See Heb. 10:22. When we draw nigh to God He draws nigh to us (see James 4:8). There is a beautiful reciprocal relationship between man and God: the closer we draw to Him, the more fully He is able to reveal Himself.

Lord God. The Hebrew reads *'Adonai Yahweh*, an unusual combination (see Vol. I, pp. 171–173). Beneath the psalmist's doubts, there had always been a measure of trust in God. Henceforth there should be no more doubt, only serene trust.

That I may declare. The psalmist recognizes his responsibility to tell others how he has passed from doubt to confidence, how he has solved in the Lord Jehovah the problem that is the theme of the psalm. The psalm closes with this solemn vow.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

8 PP 124
9–11 Ed 144
11 COL 177; GC 274
12 5T 397
24 CH 290; GW 263; ML 25; 1T 408; 5T 547
24, 25 6T 367
26 PP 413

PSALM 74

[18]

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 74 was possibly composed after the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. It vividly depicts the misery of the Jews, with particular emphasis upon the destruction of the Temple. The psalm should be compared with its companion elegy, Ps. 79, which places emphasis upon the slaughter of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This elegiac poem consists of seven irregular stanzas. There is a striking similarity between the language of Ps. 74 and Lamentations.

It is said that Ps. 74 was one of the fighting hymns of the Scottish Covenanters, and of the French Cevenoles. The Vaudois exiles, after their frightful winter journey through the Alps, sang Ps. 74 as they entered Geneva, their "city of refuge," the welcoming crowds echoing their song. In 1689, led by Henri Arnaud, 700 of these Vaudois fought their way home again to the singing of this same psalm.

On the superscription see p. 617, 628. If the psalm is postexilic as is generally agreed, "Asaph" should probably be understood as a tribe name applying equally to his descendants.

1. Cast us off. See Ps. 13:1; 43:2; 44:9; 79:5. It seems that God has disowned His people (see Lam. 5:20).

Smoke. Smoke suggests fire; anger is frequently compared to fire (see Deut. 32:22; Ps. 18:7, 8; cf. Lam. 2:3).

Sheep of thy pasture.. Compare Ps. 79:13; 95:7. In calling the people God's sheep, the psalmist heightens the tenderness of his appeal. How strange, he implies, that God should cast off His defenseless people, who are most in need of His care.

2. Thou hast purchased. See Ex. 15:16.

The rod. Heb. ***shebeṭ***, "staff." The "staff" came to denote the tribe, probably from its use as a symbol of authority, religious or secular.

Inheritance. See Ps. 28:9; cf. Deut. 32:8. Israel is called the "rod of thine inheritance" (see Jer. 10:16).

Thou hast redeemed. See the phraseology of Ex. 15:13.

Mount Zion. See on Ps. 48:2.

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[18]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 57:7). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

3. Lift up thy feet. The psalmist beseeches God to come quickly to visit the ruins of Mt. Zion and to intervene.

Perpetual desolations. Ruins so extensive as to appear complete and permanent. It seemed that they would never be built again.

Hath done. The Babylonians had carried off everything that was valuable (see 2 Kings 25:13–17), and had set fire to the Temple (see Ps. 74:7). A description of the desecration follows in vs. 4–8. These details tend to establish the historical background of the psalm, as given in the Introduction.

4. Roar. The reference is to the tumult of war, the invading despoilers being likened to wild beasts (see Isa. 5:29; Jer. 2:15).

Ensigns. They impudently set up their battle standards in place of the true emblems of Jehovah. The holy place fell under the sway of a foreign power (see Num. 2:2). Pagan standards set up in the Temple marked the height of ignominy for the Jews.

5. Lifted up axes. The enemy-soldiers are pictured as chopping up the woodwork of the Temple.

6. But. Or, "and." The activities of vs. 5, 6 are continuous and contemporary, not contrasting.

Carved work. See 1 Kings 6:29. This was cut down, broken off, probably for the sake of the gold overlay (see 1 Kings 6:22, 32, 35).

7. Have cast fire. The Babylonians actually set fire to the Temple (see 2 Kings 25:9).

Dwelling place. See Ex. 20:24; Deut. 12:11.

To the ground. The Temple was polluted by being made a heap of ruins (see Lam. 2:2).

8. Synagogues. Literally, "places of meeting." The translation "synagogue" occurs here doubtless because it was not known that the synagogue was a late (postexilic) institution. The Jewish word for synagogue is *beth hakkeneseth*.

9. Our signs. See v. 4.

Any prophet. Compare Lam. 2:9; Eze. 7:26.

How long. This verse presents Israel's cup of misery as filled; it is the saddest verse in the psalm.

10. Blaspheme thy name. Compare a similar appeal in vs. 18, 22. It seems that calamities will never cease. This appeal to the honor of God is frequent in the OT (see Ex. 32:12, 13; Num. 14:13–16; Deut. 9:28).

11. Out of thy bosom. Why does not God stretch forth His hand to deliver Israel? He appears to keep His hand in the folds of His robe. The psalmist expresses impatience because he thinks that God should demonstrate His power by annihilating the invaders.

12. For. The psalmist takes comfort in contemplating God's previous deliverances of His people. Recounting the past gives comfort for the present and hope for the future (see LS 196).

My King. See Ps. 44:4. The poet is sure that, despite appearances, God still rules.

Salvation. Literally, "salvations," that is, "divine acts of salvation."

Midst of the earth. Compare Ex. 8:22.

13. Thou. In the Hebrew the pronoun is in the emphatic initial position here and in vs. 14, 15, 17 (see Ps. 65:9–11).

Didst divide the sea. At the time of the crossing of the Red Sea (see Ex. 14:21; cf. Ps. 77:16).

Dragons. Heb. *tanninim*, "see monsters," presumably symbolic of Egyptian power (see Eze. 29:3). The allusion seems to be to the destruction of Pharaoh's armies in the Red Sea (see Ex. 14:27–30; 15:4).

14. Heads of leviathan. See on Isa. 27:1. Evidently another allusion to Egypt's power (see on v. 13).

People inhabiting. The wild creatures of the desert (see Prov. 30:25, 26). The literal language portrays the monsters of the deep killed, thrown upon the shore, and made food for the wild creatures.

15. Thou didst cleave. The allusion may be to God's bringing water out of the rock at the command of Moses (see Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:8; cf. Ps. 78:15, 16), or to the passage of the Red Sea (see Joshua 2:10), or to the crossing of the Jordan (see Joshua 3:13; 4:23; 5:1).

Driedst up mighty rivers. An obvious allusion to the crossing of the Jordan (see Joshua 3:13; 4:23; 5:1).

16. Thine. The poet's view enlarges from God's miracles in delivering His people, to the wider view of God's constant power and glory in nature.

Light. Heb. *ma'or*, "luminary," here probably the sun (see Gen. 1:15, 16; cf. Ps. 136:7–9).

17. Borders. Natural land and sea boundaries (see Gen. 1:9; Job 26:10; Jer. 5:22).

18. Remember. Compare v. 2.

Hath reproached. See Lam. 1:7; 2:7, 15, 16; see on Ps. 74:10; cf. v. 22.

Name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17.

19. Turtledove. God's children are exquisitely compared to a tender and gentle dove, beloved of God.

22. Plead. The psalmist realizes that the cause is God's, and that it is God's honor that is concerned. Whatever is done to God's children is regarded as done to Him. It is well for puny man to recognize God's ultimate concern and adjust himself as an instrument in God's hands to work out the will of God.

23. Forget not. The psalmist closes his prayer with a petition for just retribution upon the enemies (cf. 2 Kings 19:28).

Tumult. The reference is evidently to the enemies invading Jerusalem with loud war cries.

Those that rise up against thee. Those who set themselves in opposition to God's purposes by working against His appointed leaders often deceive themselves into believing that their course of action is of no particular concern to God (see Ex. 16:8; 1 Sam. 8:7).

Increaseath. Rather, "ascends."

The psalm seems to break off almost abruptly, as if the psalmist were stopped in the midst of his portrayal of the increasing depredations in the land.

PSALM 75

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 75 is a hymn of deliverance from the enemy. It is altogether probable that it was employed to celebrate Israel's deliverance from Assyria at the time of the retreat of Sennacherib (2 Kings 19:35, 36). Like Ps. 46 and 47, which it somewhat resembles, the poem is vividly dramatic, especially in its presentation of God as the

righteous judge. In its justification of the timeliness of God's justice, the psalm is a rebuke to the impatience of man.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 629.

1. Do we give thanks. The use of the first person plural pronoun suggests that the psalm was intended for public worship. The repetition of the phrase lends liturgical emphasis.

Name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17.

Is near. In His manifestation of power in delivering Israel from the enemy, God manifests His nearness (see Deut. 4:7).

Thy wondrous works declare. Or, "they recount Thy wondrous deeds."

2. Congregation. Heb. *mo'ed*, "set time," "assembly," "place of assembly." God is introduced as Speaker (see Ps. 46:10). He chooses the opportune time, the exact moment best suited to His purposes. In our human impatience, we tend to run ahead of God (see Hab. 2:3).

Uprightly. When God judges, there is equal justice for all (see 2 Sam. 23:3; Ps. 58:1).

3. Are dissolved. When the land seems about to melt before the invader, God steps in to sustain. Without God, everything would fail.

Pillars. The earth is likened to a strong building upheld by pillars.

Selah. See p. 629.

4. Horn. Frequently a symbo1 of strength (see 1 Sam. 2:10; Ps. 89:24).

5. With a stiff neck. That is, arrogantly, imperiously, obstinately; the phrase "a stiff neck" is common in the Pentateuch (see Ex. 32:9; 33:3, 5; Deut. 9:6, 13; 31:27).

6. Promotion. Literally, "lifting up." Success does not come from natural geographic advantages or from nations inhabiting the regions at the four points of the compass, but from man's conformity to God's eternal plan (see MH 476, 477). The ultimate issue is decided by God (see v. 7).

7. Judge. See Gen. 18:25; Ps. 50:6; 82:1; 94:2.

Putteth down. True of individuals and of nations (see 1 Sam. 2:7, 8; Ps. 147:6; Dan. 2:21; 4:17).

8. Cup. God is represented as holding in His hand a cup for men to drink (see on Ps. 60:3; cf. Isa. 51:17, 22; Rev. 14:9, 10).

Full of mixture. Mixed with spices, to make the wine stronger and increase its intoxicating power (see Prov. 9:2; 23:30; Isa. 5:22).

Dregs. The wicked must empty the cup, drinking its entire contents. This impressive picture of the righteous judgment of God is well calculated to inspire a fear of sin.

9. I. The psalmist speaks for himself, and, as an act of public worship, for the people of Israel.

Will declare. The psalmist pledges himself to declare the righteousness of God's dealing with men (see v. 1).

10. Horns. See on v. 4.

Will I cut off. "I" may mean God; the Hebrew language abounds in such sudden changes in person. The psalmist may speak for God, or the psalmist may speak for the people, confident that God will assist them in defeating the wicked.

The psalm closes with a universal statement of God's just government.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

6, 7 MH 476

PSALM 76

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 76 is an ode of thanksgiving for the deliverance of Jerusalem from great peril. The psalm was fittingly used to celebrate the occasions of the defeat of the Assyrian hosts under Sennacherib (see PK 361, 362; cf. GC 23). The psalmist looks beyond the scenes of immediate victory and sees in them the vindication of God's justice, proving both the folly of man's wrath and the wisdom of submitting to God. The psalm consists of four stanzas of three verses each. It is said that this ode was used by the English after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and by the Scottish Covenanters after the defeat of Claverhouse in 1679.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 629.

1. Is God known. See Ps. 9:16; 48:3.

Name. See on Ps. 5:11; 17:7.

Israel. The synonymous parallelism of the two clauses of this verse indicates that "Israel" is synonymous with "Judah." The names evidently do not here refer to the two divisions of the nation, which divisions most likely were effected after the time the psalm was composed (see GC 23).

In v. 1–3 Jerusalem is celebrated as the abode of God, whence He displays His power.

76***2. Salem.*** The shorter and older name for Jerusalem; the "peaceful" place, where God's presence abode (see on Gen. 14:18; see also PP 703).

Zion. See on Ps. 48:2.

3. There. In Zion, whence God's power was displayed.

Arrows of the bow. Literally, "flames of the bow," probably describing arrows flying with the speed of lightning.

Battle. The idea is that the enemies' devices were completely upset by the power of God (see Ps. 46:9).

Selah. See p. 629.

4. More glorious. Verses 4–6 describe the sudden destruction of the invaders.

Mountains of prey. Perhaps thus designated because they are considered as the stronghold of robbers, from which these bandits went forth to plunder. God, who made the mountains, is superior to them in power and glory. The LXX reads, "everlasting mountains."

5. The stouthearted. The invaders, boasting of their strength.

Have slept their sleep. They are dead (see on Ps. 13:3).

Found their hands. The mighty men are paralyzed, unable to use their hands to resist.

6. At thy rebuke. When God spoke, they were discomfited.

The chariot and horse. Charioteers and horsemen (by the figure of metonymy; cf. Isa. 43:17).

7. Thou, even thou. Emphatic repetition. Verses 7–9 describe the destruction of the enemy as an act of judgment that teaches a lesson to all the world.

Art to be feared. Or, "art to be reverenced," because His power has overthrown the enemy.

When once. Better, "from the time." If such invading armies have been overcome by God's sudden display of power, who could possibly resist God with any hope of success?

8. Judgment. The overthrow of the enemy was regarded as a judgment from heaven.

Was still. The earth appeared to be silent, reverently listening to the voice of God pronouncing judgment (see Ps. 114:3–7).

9. When God arose. See Ps. 3:7; 7:6; 44:26; 68:1.

Selah. See p. 629.

10. Shall praise thee. The wickedness of man gives occasion for great deeds on God's part. Man's hostility to God gives opportunity for the display of God's power that brings praise to Him (see Ex. 9:16; 18:11).

Restrain. Literally, "thou wilt gird." The parallelism of the two clauses in the verse indicates that God puts on, as an ornament, the last powerless efforts of feeble man to assert his own strength, clothing Himself thus to His own glory. The experience of Daniel is a notable example of the operation of this principle (see PK 543, 544).

11. Vow. The poet addresses God's people (see Ps. 22:25).

Bring presents. Our measure of gratitude is sometimes shown in our gifts.

12. He shall cut off. God will cut down their pride, referring to what He had done as celebrated in this psalm. "Cut off" suggests the work of a vinedresser, pruning the vines or cutting off the clusters of grapes (see Isa. 18:5).

Spirit. Heb. *ruach*, literally, "wind" (see on Eccl. 12:7).

Kings. God defeats the plans of kings as well as of princes when His good pleasure dictates. The psalm closes with an expression of the finality of God's dealing with evil men. Compare Rev. 6:15–17; 19:17–21.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–12 PK 362
2 GC 23
10 PK 543; 5T 453
11 4T 471

PSALM 77

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 77 is the poetic record of a soul trying to find a reason for his apparent desertion by God, and attempting to discover a way out of the darkness, finally surmounting his sorrow by the recollection of God's past mercies to Israel. The psalm naturally falls into two parts, v. 11 marking the transition from grief and expostulation to hope and confidence. The psalmist speaks not only for himself but for Israel as a people. With regard to the authorship of the psalm see EGW, Supplementary Material, on Ps. 77:7, 10–12.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. I cried. Verses 1–6 show the intensity of the psalmist's feelings. There is a fluctuation between statement of fact and expression of desire and emotion.

2. In the day. See Ps. 50:15; cf. 35:3. Ps. 77:2, 3 shows the reality and intensity of the prayer. Everything the psalmist did, even meditating on God, seemed but to intensify his grief.

My sore. Literally, "my hand." The interpretation "sore" comes from the idea that "hand" may be the symbol of a "stroke" (see Job 23:2, where "stroke" is literally "hand"). The translation "my hand is stretched out" (RSV) is apparently based on Jerome. The Hebrew verb translated "ran," seems elsewhere always to have the meaning "run," "flow," "be poured" (see 2 Sam. 14:14).

My soul. Or, "I" (see on Ps. 16:10).

Refused. Compare Gen. 37:35; Jer. 31:15. The experience of the psalmist should give comfort to those who fail to find an immediate answer to the honest questions of their soul.

3. Was troubled. The more the psalmist meditated upon the incomprehensible administration of God's government, the sadder he became, and the more inclined to rebel.

Overwhelmed. Compare Ps. 143:4, 5.

Selah. See p. 629.

4. Thou holdest mine eyes waking. Literally, "Thou holdest the watches of mine eyes." God keeps him from sleeping, so that he worries all the night.

5. Days of old. The psalmist reviews Israel's history in an attempt to answer the questions of his heart (see LS 196; cf. vs. 14–20; see also Deut. 32:7; Isa. 63:11).

6. Song. Heb. *neginah*, probably "music of stringed instruments." The plural form of the word appears in the superscriptions to many of the psalms (for example Ps. 4; 55; 76).

In the night. The psalmist shows a fondness for meditation and prayer in the stillness of the night (see Ps. 16:7; 17:3).

Commune. His communings are expressed in the form of questions (vs. 7–9).

7. Cast off for ever. The questions uppermost in the psalmist's mind were: Will God entirely forsake me? Will He abandon Israel?

8. Mercy. Or, "love," Heb. *chesed* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

Promise. Evidently the promise to the patriarchs (see Gen. 17:7–13; 26:24; etc.).

For evermore. Literally, "to generation and generation." God's love and His promise are the bulwarks of the psalmist's faith as they can be of ours.

9. Gracious. The psalmist seems to feel that God has abandoned one of the chief attributes of His character (see Ex. 34:6).

Tender mercies. See Ps. 25:6.

Selah. See p. 629.

10. My infirmity. The psalmist does not find fault with God, but recognizes his own inability to understand God's ways, his own weakness of spirit.

Years. Heb. *shenoth*. The word may be interpreted as either "years" or "changing." If it is interpreted as "years," the sense of the verse appears to be: "This is my grief, that the very remembrance of God's help in times past increases my sorrow and perplexity." If the word is interpreted as "changing," the sense appears to be: "It is my grief that the right hand of the Most High has changed" (RSV); in which case the psalmist is perplexed because he fails to see God dealing with him as He had dealt with him in times past.

11. I will remember. Compare Ps. 143:5. Verse 11 marks the transition from the grief and expostulation of the first section of the poem to the hope and confidence of the second section.

13. In the sanctuary. Or, "in holiness." God's way, although men may not understand it, is always holy, just, and right (see Gen. 18:25). If the KVJ translation "in the sanctuary" is accepted, the verse may be interpreted to mean that God's way is best understood in the place where He is worshiped, and from the principles expounded there (see PK 49, 50).

14. Declared thy strength. As, for instance, in the Red Sea experience described in vs. 16–20.

People. Literally, "peoples" (plural), the heathen nations that heard of the destruction of Pharaoh and the enemies of Egypt (see Ex. 15:14–16).

15. Thine arm. The arm is the symbol of strength (see Ex. 6:6; 15:16; Ps. 10:15;98:1).

Redeemed. The miracle of Israel's deliverance from Egypt is brought forth as a supreme example of God's power to save and hence as a pledge of His continual power to save His people (see Ps. 78:12, 13; 106:21, 22; 114:1–5; etc.).

Jacob and Joseph. Jacob is mentioned obviously because he was the father of the twelve tribes; Joseph, probably because he played so important a part in the affairs of Egypt.

Selah. See p. 629.

16. The waters saw thee. Verses 16–20 are a highly compact and sublimely dramatic description of the miracle of deliverance at the Red Sea. The details in these verses provide valuable incidental additions to the narrative in Exodus (see PP 287). Compare the narrative in Ex. 14:27–29.

Saw. The personification, in which the waters are represented as recognizing the presence of God and fleeing in fear, is eminently sublime. The waters fled to make way for God's people.

They were afraid. Literally, "they were in pain," as of travail.

17. Arrows. Lightning. Verses 17 and 18 describe the tempest, hurricane, thunder, lightning, accompanying the rolling back of the waters (see on Ps. 18:6–14; PP 287).

18. Voice. See on Ps. 29:3.

Lightened the world. Compare Ps. 97:4.

19. Thy way. Though invisible, God was with His people as they went through the dry bed of the sea (see Ex. 15:13; Ps. 78:52, 53). God is always with His children when they follow His guidance.

20. Like a flock. In sharp contrast to the majesty and power of God portrayed in the preceding verses, the psalmist now presents the tenderness of the Good Shepherd (see Ps. 78:52; Isa. 63:11 see DA 480).

Moses and Aaron. God was the real Leader; Moses and Aaron were His instruments (see Num. 33:1). As God delivered Israel at the Red Sea, so He will deliver His people in time of peril. This realization should help us to put our trust in Him at all times. The psalm closes with assurance in the redemptive power of God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

13, 14 PK 50
17–20PP 287
20 DA 480

PSALM 78

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 78 is the longest of the national hymns of Israel (see Ps. 105, 106). It surveys the history of Israel from Egypt down to the establishment of the kingdom under David. The psalmist appeals to the past with its recurring events, rebellion, and consequent suffering and punishment, for the purpose of warning Israel to be faithful to God in the present and in the future. The psalm is essentially didactic: it aims to instruct toward righteous living. As such, it does not follow the historical stream with chronological exactness. The psalmist arranges historical matter as best suited to his purpose, to show the goodness of God in spite of Israel's rebellion. No regular stanza

division is evident; the major divisions are like paragraphs of prose. The poem abounds in rapid, stirring phrases and brilliant imagery. As poetry, Ps. 78 should be compared with the purely factual accounts in the historical books of the OT.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 628.

1. My people. Verses 1–8 announce the purpose of the psalm. The narrative of Israel's history about to be recounted should provide a warning for the present and counsel for the future (see LS 196).

Law. Heb. *torah*, "teaching" (see on Prov. 3:1).

2. Parable. Heb. *mashal* (see on Ps. 49:4; cf. Matt. 13:34, 35). A parable requires attention and meditation for full understanding.

4. Generation to come. The course of tradition is indicated. It is a sacred trust for each generation to hand on to the next the story of God's providence.

5. Appointed a law. God purposed that His law should be taught from generation to generation and become a living power in the lives of the Israelites (see Ex. 10:2; 13:8, 14; Deut. 4:9; 6:7, 20).

9. Ehphraim. This tribe is probably singled out by name because it was for a time the most numerous and aggressive of the tribes. Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim (Num. 13:8, 16). What specific incident, if any, is here referred to, is not known. Ephraim may here stand for the entire kingdom.

11. Forgat. See Ps. 106:13; cf. Ps. 78:7.

12. Zoan. An Egyptian store-city on the east shore of the Tanitic branch of the Nile. The city was also known as Tanis, and is called Raamses in Ex. 1:11.

13. Divided. See Ex. 14:16. Ps. 78:13–16 enumerates instances of forgetfulness with respect to the Red Sea experience, the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire in the wilderness, and the provision of water in the desert.

As an heap. See Ex. 15:8.

14. Cloud. See Ex. 13:21; Ps. 105:39.

15. Clave the rocks. See Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:11.

17. Provoking. See Deut. 9:22; Heb. 3:16. Ps. 78:17–31 describes Israel's murmuring for flesh and drink, and the ensuing punishment.

Wilderness. Heb. *ṣiyyah*, which designates a dry, waterless region.

18. Tempted. Heb. *nasah*, literally, "tested," or "tried."

By asking. The feelings of the heart gained expression in active murmuring.

Meat. Heb. *'okel*, "food," a general term signifying anything eaten.

For their lust. Literally, "for their soul," that is, for themselves (see on Ps. 16:10).

19. Furnish a table. See Ps. 23:5. The questions of vs. 19, 20, poetically put into the mouths of the murmurers, make more vivid the historical narrative. Their murmurings were "against God," who had given them every reason to trust Him.

20. Bread also. According to the historical narrative, the order of these miracles was the reverse (see Ex. 16:8, 12; 17:6; Num. 11:31, 32; 20:8–11). The psalmist departs from strict chronological order.

Flesh. Heb. *she'er*, "flesh food" (see on v. 18).

21. Fire. See Num. 11:1; Ps. 106:18.

23. Doors of heaven. Compare 2 Kings 7:2, 19; Mal. 3:10. Ps. 78:23–25 is an exquisite poetic description of the gift of the manna.

24. Had rained. See Ex. 16:4. Throughout the poetic account in this psalm, there is close identity with the phraseology of the historical record.

Corn. Heb. *dagan*, "grain," or "breadstuffs" (see Ex. 16:4; Ps. 105:40; cf. John 6:31). The manna resembled "coriander seed" (Ex. 16:31).

25. Angels' food. Literally, "bread of the mighty." The mighty ones of God are the angels (Ps. 103:20). LXX reads, "bread of angels." We must not infer from this statement that manna is the diet of angels. The phrase simply means "food provided … by the angels" (PP 297).

26. He caused. Verses 26–31 are a graphic poetic account of the miracle of the quails and the results of the miracle.

27. Flesh. See Ex. 16:13; Num. 11:31.

29. Were well filled. See Num. 11:20; cf. Ps. 106:15.

32. Believed not. See Heb. 4:2, 6. Ps. 78:32–55 continues the narrative of lessons unlearned, resuming the account of the Exodus in v. 42.

34. They returned. Verses 34–39 are a most touching picture of man's sin and punishment, his temporary return to God, and God's infinite compassion for His erring child.

36. They lied. Their repentance was not abhorrence of sin, but fear of punishment (see on Ps. 32:6).

40. Provoked him. See on v. 17.

41. Tempted. See on v. 18.

Limited. Or, "set limitations" to the power of the Infinite, the Omnipotent.

Holy One of Israel. Compare Ps. 71:22.

42. Remembered not. See Ps. 105:5.

43. His signs. The narrative of the plagues is resumed from v. 12. The psalmist seems to mention only six of the ten plagues, beginning with the first, continuing with the fourth, second, eight, and seventh, in that order, and closing his account with the tenth. The psalm is not a scientific treatise, but an inspired poem, choosing only sufficient facts from the historical survey to create the impression desired.

Zoan. See v. 12.

44. Rivers into blood. The first plague (Ex. 7:17–21). The plural denotes the Nile and its canals.

45. Flies … frogs. The fourth and second plagues (Ex. 8:20–24, 1–6).

46. Locust. The eight plague (Ex. 10:4–15; cf. Ps. 105:34; Joel 1:4).

47. Hail. The seventh plague (Ex. 9:18–26). The hail both ruined the products of the land and destroyed the cattle.

Frost. Heb. *chanamal*, a word occurring only here. Its meaning is doubtful. From a similar Arabic root some derive the meaning "devastating flood." "Frost" is the reading of the LXX.

48. Hot thunderbolts. Heb. *reshaphim*, "flames," here probably describing "lightnings" (see Ex. 9:24).

49. Fierceness. Verses 49–51 describe the tenth plague (Ex. 12:29, 30).

Evil angels. That is, angels bringing evil.

51. Chief of their strength. Parallel with "firstborn" in literary structure and meaning (see p. 24).

Tabernacles of Ham. Or, "tents of Ham." Ham was the father of Mizraim, the ancestor of the Egyptians (see on Gen. 10:6; cf. Ps 105:23, 27).

52. Like sheep. This verse pictures the Shepherd of Israel leading His sheep from pasture to pasture through the wilderness (see on Ps. 23:1 cf. Ps. 77:20).

53. The sea overwhelmed. A brief return to the discussion of the deliverance at the Red Sea, with the idealistic contrast between Israel's confidence and the terror of the Egyptians (Ex. 14:13, 25).

54. To this mountain. With the license of poetic rapidity the psalmist spans the distance between the Red Sea experience and the entrance into Canaan in one verse. The Israelites are on the borders of the Promised Land.

55. An inheritance. See Num. 34:2; Joshua 23:4.

56. Tempted. Compare vs. 17, 18, 41. Verses 56–64 resume the woeful story of rebellion and punishment.

57. A deceitful bow. One that does not shoot straight to the mark, and which is therefore, disappointing to the archer (see Hosea 7:16).

58. High places. Centers of idolatrous worship.

Jealousy. See Ex. 20:5; 34:14. God requires that we serve Him with nothing less than our entire being (see Deut. 6:13, 20–25; Matt. 4:10).

59. Abhorred. Rather, "rejected."

60. Shiloh. For about 300 years the tabernacle and the ark were at Shiloh, a place about 10 mi. (16 km.) north of Bethel (see Joshua 18:10; Judges 18:31; 1 Sam. 4:3). After the ark was captured by the Philistines (1 Sam. 4) and recovered, it was never returned to Shiloh but was finally taken to Jerusalem (see PP 514; cf. Jer. 7:12, 14).

61. His strength. The ark (see 1 Sam. 4:3, 21; Ps. 132:8).

62. Unto the sword. See 1 Sam. 4:2, 10.

63. The fire consumed. A picture of desolation: young men consumed in battle, maidens unmarried, priests slain (see 1 Sam. 4:11), the dead unmourned (see Job 27:15). Consider the desolation of a land in which there are no marriage ceremonies or proper funeral rites.

65. As one out of sleep. In this powerful figure the psalmist represents God as utterly indifferent to His people, and then rousing Himself to activity in their behalf. The use of this strange figure and of the figure of the strong man crying aloud on waking from a drunken stupor, seems alien to our modern Western thinking, but is in no way unnatural to the Oriental mind.

67. Tabernacle of Joseph. For many years the sanctuary had been in the territory of Joseph (see v. 60). Later Jerusalem, in the territory of Judah, became the home of the ark (2 Sam. 6:1–18).

70. Chose David. The psalm closes with the beautiful picture of the shepherd of the flock becoming, by God's choice, the shepherd of Israel (see 1 Sam. 16:11–13; 2 Sam. 3:18; 7:5, 8).

71. Following the ewes. Not only does the faithful shepherd lead the sheep; he follows the ewes in order that he may pick up, when necessary, the newborn lambs of the flock.

72. Fed them. A beautiful tribute to the shepherd-king of Israel: he ruled with integrity and skill (see 1 Kings 9:4).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–45T 37
4–7MH 448
5–85T 38
7 PK 378
10 8T 276
15, 16 PP 298; SR 132
18–21PP 378
19 CH 495; EW 56; FE 319; MH 200; PK 242; 6T 178
24 COL 287; MH 202, 311
24, 25 PP 297
25 MM 277; SR 130; 6T 372
32–35, 37–39PP 410
37–39Ed 45
38, 39 8T 276
41 3T 209
52, 58, 60, 61 PP 545
61 8T 276
68, 69 GC 23

PSALM 79

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 79 is an elegy on the desolation of Jerusalem at the time of the Babylonian captivity (see Ps. 74). It begins with a graphic description of Jerusalem in ruins and her inhabitants put to the sword, proceeds with prayer for deliverance and the meting out of justice upon the invaders, and closes with a song of praise and promise of eternal gratitude. The psalm, while irregular in stanzaic form, flows smoothly throughout in thought. It was a favorite of the French Huguenots and of the English Puritans.

On the superscription see Introduction to Ps. 74; also pp. 617, 627.

1. Heathen. Or, "nations" (see on Ps. 2:1). Verses 1–4 graphically lament the terrible calamities that have come upon Israel.

Inheritance. See Ps. 28:9; 74:2; 78:62.

Have they defiled. By breaking into it, stealing the sacred furniture, demolishing its appointments, setting fire to it, the Babylonians had polluted the Temple (see 2 Chron. 36:17, 18; Jer. 52:17–23; cf. Ps. 74:4–7).

On heaps. See 2 Chron. 36:19; Jer. 9:11; 26:18; Micah 3:12.

2. Dead bodies. This verse describes the horrible slaughter when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans. The dead were left unburied, food for wild animals and vultures (see 2 Chron. 36:17; cf. Deut. 28:26; Jer. 7:33; 8:2; 9:22; etc.).

3. None to bury. See Jer. 14:16. To the ancients, not to be accorded honorable burial was considered a great ignominy. Even executed criminals were required to be buried decently (see Deut. 21:23).

4. Neighbours. See on v. 12.

5. How long? Compare Ps. 74:1, 10; 77:7–9; 89:46.

Jealousy. See on Ps. 78:58.

6. Pour out. With vs. 6, 7 compare Jer. 10:25, which is strikingly similar.

Have not known. Perhaps better, "did not acknowledge." All nations have been given a degree of divine revelation (see Rom. 1:18–25; 2:14–16).

8. Former iniquities. Or, "the iniquities of them that were before us." The prayer is that God will not allow them to suffer the results of the sins of their forefathers (see Ex. 20:5; Lam. 5:7).

Prevent. See on Ps. 18:5; cf. Ps. 59:10.

9. God of our salvation. The psalmist has faith in God's power to save.

Glory of thy name. God is asked to come to Israel's help, not for Israel's sake—she is undeserving—but for His own glory (see Ex. 32:12). Twice in this verse, appeal is made to God's name (see Ps. 5:11; 7:17).

Purge away. Heb. *kaphar*, generally translated, "make atonement" (see Ex. 30:15).

10. Wherefore? In antiquity, victory over a foreign power was considered triumph over its gods. The psalmist is jealous for the vindication of God's power. Moses made a similar plea on at least two occasions (Ex. 32:12; Num. 14:13–19).

The heathen. Nations (see on Ps. 2:1; 9:5).

Let him be known. The psalmist pleads that God's judgment may come upon the wicked nations that have shed the blood of His servants.

11. Sighing. The reference is to the groaning of the Hebrews in captivity (see Ps. 137:1–6; Lam. 1:3–5).

Appointed to die. Literally, "children of death" (see Ps. 102:20).

12. Neighbours. The nations surrounding Israel, who gloried in Israel's misfortune rather than attempting to help her against the invader (see on v. 4; cf. Ps. 44:13; Dan. 9:16).

Sevenfold. The idea is that of complete vengeance, seven being a symbol of completeness (see Gen. 4:15, 24; Ps. 12:6; Matt. 18:21, 22).

13. Sheep of thy pasture. See on Ps. 74:1; cf. Ps. 78:52.

Shew forth. Israel, situated as she was on the "highway of the nations," was to be the light of the world (see Isa. 43:21).

To all generations. In a paean of praise, the poet promises to pass on to succeeding generations the story of God's goodness.

PSALM 80

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 80 was written at a time of great national distress. It is a prayer for the restoration of God's favor to His people. In this beautiful and pathetic elegy the psalmist likens Israel to a once carefully tended vine transplanted from Egypt, but now exposed to ruin. The psalm is marked by a recurring refrain, with slight variation, in vs. 3, 7, 14, 19. Stanza arrangement is irregular.

On the authorship of the psalm see COL 214; cf. v. 8.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 628.

1. Give ear. See on Ps. 20:1; 55:1.

Shepherd of Israel. Israel is God's flock (see on Ps. 23:1–4; cf. Ps. 74:1; 77:20; Ps. 78:52; 49:24).

Cherubims. Rather "cherubim" (see on Ps. 18:10). "Cherubims" is really a double plural, formed by affixing *s,* the sign of the English plural, to *im,* the sign of the Hebrew plural. For the cherubim on the ark, see on Ex. 25:18.

2. Ephraim. The three tribes here mentioned were descendants of the same mother (see Gen. 46:19, 20; Num. 2:18–24; 10:22–24).

3. Turn us again. A refrain appearing in varied augmented forms in vs. 7, 14, and 19.

God. Heb. *'Elohim*. The refrains in vs. 7 and 14 have *'Elohim ṣeba'oth*, "God of hosts" (see on Ps. 24:10; (see Vol. I, pp. 170–173).

Thy face to shine. See Ps. 4:6; 67:1.

4. Lord God of hosts. See on Ps. 24:10; cf. 59:5; 80:19; 84:8.

Against the prayer. God seemed to be angry even when His people pray (see Lam. 3:44.

5. In great measure. God seemed to measure out their sorrow as one measures out a drink for another. For a Ugaritic parallel see on Ps. 42:3.

7. God of hosts. The refrain is augmented from "O God" to "O God of hosts," perhaps in an attempt to show deeper earnestness (see on v. 4).

8. Thou hast brought. The psalmist now describes Israel as it was and as it is now, under the figure of a vine. The description is carried out with great beauty and pathos (vs. 8–19).

Vine. Employed frequently as a figure of Israel (see Isa. 5:1–7; Hosea 10:1; DA 675). At the entrance to the Temple in Jesus' time a vine wrought of gold and silver represented Israel as a fruitful and flourishing vine (see DA 575; cf. John 15:1–5).

Hast cast out. God dispossessed the nations of Palestine for their sin and permitted Israel to inherit their lands (see Ex. 3:8; 33:2).

9. Preparedst. Heb. *panah*, here suggesting the idea "to clear." God's loving solicitude is clearly portrayed.

Filled. The extent of Israel's domain is represented by a luxuriant vine spreading over a vast area.

10. Goodly cedars. The supplied words, "were like," are better left out. The passage is more simply translated, "the goodly cedars were covered with their branches." The psalmist pictures the boundaries of Israel extending north to Lebanon.

11. Sea. The Mediterranean, to the west.

River. The Euphrates, the eastern boundary (see Joshua 1:4; see on 1 Kings 4:21).

12. Hedges. See Isa. 5:5. It seemed that God had left Israel's frontiers unprotected.

13. Waste. As wild animals, like the fierce wild hog, the lion, the tiger, the wolf, ruin the vineyard, so Israel's enemies lay waste the land.

14. God of hosts. See on v. 4.

Heaven. God's dwelling place (see 1 Kings 8:30, 34, 36, 39, 43, etc.).

Visit. Not in wrath, but in mercy.

16. Burned. This verse describes the desolate condition of the vineyard, as if ruined by fire and ax.

18. Quicken us. That is, bring us to life.

Call upon thy name. That is, worship Thee. The psalmist speaks for the nation. If the church would keep its vows, how soon God's work on earth might be done.

19. Lord God of hosts. See on v. 4. The psalm closes with the refrain in its most complete form.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 PP 62
1–11 PK 356
8 GC 19

12–15, 18, 19 PK 359

PSALM 81

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 81 is a festal hymn presumably composed for use at one of the great Hebrew festivals—probably the Passover or the Feast of Tabernacles. It begins with a joyful summons to join in the worship of the festival (vs. 1–5), and then proceeds to present the significance of the festival by reviewing God's relationship to Israel in the past and expostulating with His people, urging them to walk in His ways (vs. 6–16). In the first part of the psalm, the psalmist speaks; in the second part, God addresses the people and claims obedience in the light of past blessings, and promises future blessings as the result of obedience. In modern synagogue ritual Ps. 81 is sung on the Jewish New Year's Day.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 629.

1. Sing aloud. Indicating great earnestness and sincerity (see 2 Chron. 20:19; Ps. 33:3). Ps. 81:1–5 is a summons to worship.

Strength. See Ps. 27:1; 28:8.

2. Timbrel. Possibly a drum (see p. 30).

Harp. See p. 34.

Psaltery. See p. 33.

3. Trumpet. Heb. *shophar*, as distinct from *chaṣoṣerah*, also translated "trumpet" (see pp. 39, 40).

New moon. See Lev. 23:24; Num. 29:1.

Time appointed. Heb. *keseh*, "full moon."

Solemn feast. Some think the Feast of Tabernacles is referred to (see 1 Kings 8:2, 65; 12:32; Neh. 8:14; 2 Chron. 5:3; 7:8). Between the Feast of Trumpets, on the first of Tishri, and the Feast of Tabernacles, which began on the 15th of Tishri, came the Day of Atonement on the 10th day of the month. This order of festivals made Tabernacles the chief annual feast. According to some commentators, the Passover is intended by the expression "our solemn feast day," owing to the position accorded the Passover in the ritual calendar.

4. For. The festivals should be joyfully kept because God appointed them, and because they are considered a special privilege of the people of God (see Lev. 23:23–25).

5. Joseph. The nation of Israel, represented by Joseph, probably because of his prominence during the sojourn in Egypt (see Ps. 80:1; cf. Gen. 49:26). He was, literally, the "savior" of his people.

Through the land. Probably referring to the time of the Exodus, and to the plagues in particular. Perhaps special reference is made to the tenth plague, which effected the release of the Israelites.

Where I heard. The sentence beginning with this phrase should probably be connected with the following verse, and thus introduce God's speech of expostulation which occupies vs. 6–16. There is no verbal indication of change of speakers. Such abrupt transitions are not uncommon in Hebrew.

6. Burden. Egyptian slaves often carried their burdens on the shoulder. God removed the burden of bondage by delivering the Hebrews from Egypt (see Ex. 1:11–14; 5:4–17).

From the pots. Or, "from the basket," probably referring to the basket in which the slaves carried the clay which was to be made into bricks.

7. Thou calledst in trouble. See Ex. 2:23; 3:9; 14:10.

Secret place of thunder. Perhaps a reference to the pillar of cloud (see Ex. 14:24), or to the experience at Sinai (see Ex. 19:17–19), where God entered into covenant relation with Israel.

Meribah. See Ex. 17:1–7; Num. 20:13; cf. Ps. 78:20.

Selah. See p. 629.

8. O my people. Even though rebellious, Israel is still God's people (see v. 11). Blessed thought: God does not easily cast off His people.

9. Any strange god. An allusion to the second commandment of the Decalogue (see Ex. 20:4–6; Deut. 5:8–10).

10. I am. See Ex. 20:2; cf. Deut. 5:6. In view of Israel's tendency to forget, this reminder was continually needed.

Open thy mouth wide. God redeemed Israel from Egypt, and then supplied all their needs, material and spiritual. O the opulence of the gifts of God (see Eph. 3:20)!

"Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much."

11. My people. See on v. 8. The main discourse is resumed from v. 7.

Would not hearken. See Deut. 32:15, 18; Ps. 78:10, 41, 56; cf. 2 Kings 17:14; 2 Chron. 36:15, 16; Eze. 20:8; Hosea 9:17.

12. I gave them up. God's Spirit does not always strive with men (see Gen. 6:3). When men persist in rebellion and hardness of heart, God lets them have their way and suffer the results of their choosing. God's government is a government of free moral choice; God does not coerce the will. He warns man that disobedience brings ruin, but does not prevent man's contrary choice (see PP 440, 441).

13. My people. See on v. 8. The address turns from Israel of the past to Israel of the present, showing what the results of faithful obedience to God's commands would be.

Had hearkened. Rather, "would hearken."

Had walked. Rather, "would walk" (see Deut. 5:29; 32:29; Isa. 48:18; Luke 19:42).

"For of all sad words of tongue or pen, The saddest are these: 'It might have been!'"
—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER, "Maud Muller."

14. Should soon have subdued. Rather, "should soon subdue." The appeal is to the Israel of the psalmist's time. Repentance and obedience are the price of deliverance from the enemy.

15. Should have submitted. Preferably, "should submit."

Their time. That is, as a nation.

16. He should have fed. Rather, "He should feed." Such sudden changes from "I" to "he" are frequent in Hebrew poetry (see Ps. 22:26).

Finest. Literally, "fat" (see Deut. 32:14; Ps. 147:14). When God bestows His gifts, He chooses the best. There is nothing niggardly about our Father's generosity.

Honey out of the rock. The best and purest honey, stored by the bees in the rocky fastness of the mountains (see Deut. 32:13).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 8T 12
11, 12 PP 441; 3T 73
12 3T 172

PSALM 82

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 82 is God's arraignment of the unjust judges who are bearing sway over Israel. It was probably composed at a time when there was much that was unjust and corrupt in the administration of justice. The psalm has three divisions: (1) God is introduced as Supreme Judge (v. 1); (2) God proceeds to denounce unjust judges and corrupt judgment (vs. 2–7); (3) the psalmist implores God to arise in judgment (v. 8). The psalm has lessons for all God's children in their dealings with one another. Ps. 58, which is similar in theme but different in treatment, and Isa. 3:13–15 are of comparative value in the study of this short but impressive psalm. The experience of Jehoshaphat is also worthy of study (see 2 Chron. 19:8–11; PK 197, 198).

On the superscription see pp. 617, 627.

1. God. Heb. *'Elohim* (see Vol. I, pp. 170, 171).

Standeth. Or, "taketh His stand," as in convening or joining an assembly.

Mighty. Heb. *'El*, "God" (see Vol. I, p. 171). "The congregation of the mighty [God]" may refer to Israel in general (see Num. 27:17; 31:16; Joshua 22:16, 17), or specifically, from the context, to the assembly of magistrates, to whom God delegates the authority of administering justice.

Gods. Heb. *'elohim*, here possibly "judges," as *'elohim* is translated in Ex. 21:6; Ex. 22:8, 9. Judges may be called *'elohim* in the sense that judges are representatives of God's sovereignty (see Ex. 7:1).

2. How long? God, the Sovereign Judge, speaks to Israel's judges.

Accept the persons. Showing partiality on account of circumstances or position was forbidden in Israel (see Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17; Acts 10:34).

Selah. See p. 629.

3. Defend. Compare Isa. 1:23; Jer. 5:28.

Do justice to. Not only hear their causes, but render true justice in decisions.

4. Rid them. Or, "snatch them away."

5. They know not. This verse seems to be a parenthetical observation of the psalmist, making vivid, as by an illustration, God's denunciation of unjust judges (see Ps. 53:4; 73:22).

In darkness. Refusing to know God, they are unqualified for their divinely imposed duty of rendering just judgment (see Prov. 2:13; John 3:19).

Foundations of the earth. Probably here the fundamental principles of moral government.

Out of course. When unjust judges administer the law, the essentials of moral government totter and fall. Earthly government, which should reflect God's government, turns into anarchy.

6. Gods. Heb. *'elohim* (see on v. 1). On the Saviour's use of this verse, see John 10:34–38.

7. Men. Heb. *'adam*, "mankind" (see on Ps. 8:4; also on Gen. 1:26).

Princes. Persons of exalted rank. Even though they were called *'elohim* (see on vs. 1, 6), they will die for their unfaithfulness.

8. Arise. Compare Ps. 3:7.

Inherit all nations. In the words of John, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15; cf. Dan. 2:44, 45).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 3, 4 PK 198

PSALM 83

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 83 makes a passionate appeal to God for the deliverance of Israel and the continuance of the holy nation. A conspiracy of nations has been formed against Israel; possibly the union of Moab, Ammon, and Edom in the time of Jehoshaphat is specifically referred to (see 2 Chron. 20; PK 200). The message applies to any period when God's children are beset by a coalition of enemies and are in need of divine aid. This is one of the imprecatory psalms (see p. 624). It is said that Kruger used its verses frequently during the Boer War in addresses to the Volksraad and in the dispatches sent to his officers.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 627.

1. Keep not thou silence. See Ps. 28:1; cf. Isa. 62:7. The psalmist knows that if God's people are to be saved in the crisis, God must not be still. The impetuous succession of brief clauses is the language of entreaty in time of extremity.

2. That hate thee. Compare Ps. 81:15.

4. Cut them off. The verse indicates the presence of a well-conceived plot on the part of the surrounding nations to blot out Israel from among the nations, probably with the intention of partitioning her land among themselves (see 2 Chron. 20:11; Ps. 138:7).

No more in remembrance. Compare Deut. 32:26; Ps. 34:16; 109:13. It has always been Satan's desire to destroy the church of God. To the enemy, the words "Christ" and "Christian" are objects of supreme contempt.

5. Together. See Ps. 2:2.

6. Tabernacles. Literally, "tents," here meaning "tent dwellers" (by the figure of metonymy). The word well describes the nomadic life of the Arabian tribes.

Verses 6–8 mention the conspiring nations. Since there is no historical evidence that all those nations were confederated against Israel at any one time, it may be best to understand the catalogue of peoples as serving the purpose of poetry. The aggregation of such a formidable array of enemies heightens the color of the crisis, giving great emphasis to Israel's danger at the hands of border enemies. Israel, surrounded by enemy nations, has no recourse but to God. Sometimes God cuts men off from all material aid that they may learn to rely on Him.

Hagarenes. A nomadic people who lived east of Gilead and fought the Israelites in the time of Saul (see 1 Chron. 5:10, 19–22). Israel defeated them and occupied their land.

7. Gebal. Probably the mountain country in the northern part of Edom (see Josephus *Antiquities* ii. 1. 2).

Amalek. A people living south of Palestine between Idumaea and Egypt. They were an ancient people, inveterate foes of Israel. Contrary to God's command utterly to destroy the Amalekites. Saul spared Agag, their king (see 1 Sam. 15:8–23), and on that account was rejected from being king.

8. Assur. The Assyrians, who occupied the central part of the Tigris valley (see on Gen. 10:22).

Holpen. This word is an obsolete past participle of the verb "help."

Children of Lot. Moab and Ammon (see Gen. 19:37, 38; Deut. 2:9, 19). These nations made use of the "arm" of the other nations to carry out their nefarious plan to exterminate Israel.

Selah. See p. 629.

9. Midianites. The reference is to Gideon's victory over the Midianites (see Judges 7; 8), which was regarded as one of the most glorious victories in the history of Israel (see Isa. 9:4; 10:26).

Sisera. The story of the defeat of Jabin's armies and the death of Sisera at the hands of Deborah is told in Judges 4, and celebrated in the sublime poetry of Judges 5.

Kison. Or, "Kishon" (see on Judges 4:13).

10. Perished at En-dor. See on 1 Sam. 28:7.

As dung. Their dead bodies fertilized the soil (see 2 Kings 9:37).

11. Oreb. Oreb and Zeeb were princes of Midian slain by the Ephraimites under Gideon (see Judges 7:25).

Zebah. Zebah and Zalmunna were kings of Midian, slain by Gideon (see Judges 8:5, 21). The slaughter of Midian must have been surpassingly awful, for Isaiah mentions it along with the destruction of the Egyptians at the Red Sea as typical of the destruction to be visited on the hosts of Sennacherib (Isa. 10:26).

12. Houses. Heb. *ne'oth*, either "abodes," or "pasturelands." The conspiring enemy nations plotted to get possession of the land where God dwelt among His people.

13. A wheel. Heb. *galgal*, generally "wheel," although *galgal* seems also to have been used of the wheel-shaped dried calyx of a thistle (see Isa. 17:13). The prayer is that the enemy may be driven away in utter destruction, as our modern tumbleweed is driven before the wind.

Stubble. Or, "chaff" (see Ps. 1:4). These objects describe that which is utterly light and valueless (Job 13:25; Mal. 4:1), fit only for destruction.

14. As the flame. Compare Isa. 9:18; 10:17, 18; Zech. 12:6.

Mountains. That is, the vegetation growing on the mountains.

15. Persecute them. Compare Ps. 35:4–6.

16. Fill their faces. Disappointment and confusion usually show on the face.

Seek thy name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17. The psalmist's prayer is not that the enemies of Israel may be made to suffer, but that, through the events God permits to come upon them, they may be led to acknowledge Him and turn to Him as their God. The psalmist would have their humiliation result in submission to God's will.

17. Let them be confounded. The psalmist prays that the enemies of Israel may be humiliated and brought even to the verge of destruction, that they may turn to God in sincerity and truth (see Isa. 37:20).

18. Men. Rather, "they," in reference to the confederate nations.

Jehovah. See on Ex. 6:3.

The most high. The psalmist prays for the destruction or near destruction of Israel's enemies, not in personal vindictiveness, but to show that Jehovah is the supreme ruler of the world. The purpose of judgment is that men may know God! On this sublime note the psalm closes.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–18PK 200

PSALM 84

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 84 was composed by David, the Lord's "anointed" (v. 9; 4T 534), perhaps when he was exiled from Jerusalem. It is a passionate lyrical expression of devotion and love for the house of Jehovah and His worship. The psalm seems to describe the blessedness of those who dwell in the sacred precincts (vs. 1–4, 9–11); the blessedness of those who make pilgrimages to the sanctuary (vs. 5–8); and the blessedness of those who, deprived of the privilege of actually worshiping in God's house, nevertheless put their trust in God. The pathos of this tender poem is enhanced by the elegiac rhythm in which the Hebrew lines are cast. The sentiments of this exquisite sacred lyric are more than personal; they are the deepest sentiments of every child of God who, deprived of the privilege of communion with fellow Christians, has ever longed for fellowship with his brethren in the corporate worship of God. Ps. 84 may be compared with Ps. 42. It is said that Isabel Alison and Marion Harris, Scottish Covenanters, sang the words of Ps. 84 to the tune "Martyrs" as they went to the scaffold.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 629.

1. Amiable. Or, "lovely."

Tabernacles. Literally, "dwelling places."

2. My soul longeth. Such earnestness and fervency should characterize the Christian's prayer (see 4T 534).

Crieth out. Heb. *ranan*, generally, "to cry for joy" (see Ps. 98:4).

The living God. As distinguished from idols, which are dead (see Ps. 42:2), the only other place in the Psalter where the expression "living God" appears; cf. Joshua 3:10; Hosea 1:10. In the NT the expression "living God" occurs frequently (see Matt. 16:16; John 6:69; Acts 14:15; Rom. 9:26; 2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 3:12; Rev. 7:2; etc.).

3. Sparrow. Both the sparrow and the swallow were common in Palestine.

Thine altars. The sanctuary (by the figure of metonymy).

The general meaning of the verse, whose conclusion the poet only implies, is that even the birds have free access to the sacred precincts of the sanctuary, they make their homes there undisturbed, while the psalmist is exiled from the source of his joy, is denied the privilege of worshiping within the sacred enclosure. The nostalgic appeal of this verse is one of the most delicately beautiful expressions of homesickness in the whole realm of literature. The idea is emphasized in v. 10.

4. Blessed. See on Ps. 1:1. The first blessing is bestowed on those who dwell in the sacred precincts (see 1 Chron. 9:19 26:1; note the appropriateness of the superscription to the psalm). The psalmist envies those who devote their lives to service in the sanctuary.

Still praising. The sanctuary is a place of continued praise, a foretaste of heaven.

Selah. See p. 629.

5. Blessed. See on Ps. 1:1. The second blessing is bestowed on those who hold God in their hearts as they make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (see vs. 4, 12) at the time of the great national feasts.

Strength. Blessed is the man who realizes that God is the source of his strength (see v. 7).

Ways. Heb. *mesilloth*, "highways." The following interpretation of the passage has been suggested: the man is happy who meditates on the highways that lead to the sanctuary, who prepares to travel over them, who sets his heart on making the pilgrimage

to Jerusalem and worshiping in the sanctuary. On every succeeding pilgrimage he anticipates the familiar landmarks of the road; and ever after, every step of the familiar way lingers in his memory.

6. Baca. Heb. *baka'*. The meaning of the word is doubtful. Elsewhere *baka'* is translated "mulberry tree," but the exact botanical identification is uncertain (see on 2 Sam. 5:23). The LXX and the Vulgate translate the phrase "valley of Baca" as "valley of tears." In their faith and hope and joy the pilgrims turn the "vale of tears" into "a well." This is a beautiful illustration of the effect of real religion, spreading gladness and comfort where before there was only sorrow and trouble (see Isa. 35:1, 2, 6, 7).

A well. Real pilgrims on the way to the heavenly Zion open springs in the desert for those who follow on the way. Christians have always made the world a better place to live in. If our hearts are right with God, we shall derive refreshment even from the wretched experiences of life.

Filleth the pools. The poet sees the arid ground covered with pools of water. God's blessing rests upon everything that the pilgrims behold because their hearts are full of joy as they make their pilgrimage.

Bunyan's Bedford jail became a fountain of blessing to others because of *Pilgrim's Progress.* Florence Nightingale's experience with fever, germs, and gangrene resulted in a revolution in hospital care.

7. From strength to strength. There is no lasting fatigue in the journey of these pilgrims. They are drawn on by the joyful anticipation of worshiping in Zion. Every exhibition of strength in journeying gives added vitality, increased strength, for the next stage of the pilgrimage (see Isa. 40:31; John 1:16; Rom. 1:17; 2 Cor. 3:18). Here is a lovely illustration of the life of Christians journeying together to the New Jerusalem—by their praise, prayer, and mutual comfort, cheering one another along the way, strengthening their faith in God, and making the way less difficult as they approach the city (see Heb. 10:25; 5T 93).

Appeareth before God. The pilgrimage is successfully completed.

8. Give ear. See Ps. 20:1

Selah. See p. 629.

9. Shield. As demonstrated by the Ugaritic (see p. 618), *magen* may be a verb, meaning "to implore." The phrase can then be translated, "We implore, look, O God."

Thine anointed. See 1 Sam. 16:1; 2 Sam. 22:51; Ps. 89:20. David prays that God may look with favor upon him (see Ps. 119:132). There is great delicacy in the shift to the third person in this verse.

10. Better than a thousand. David would rather spend a single day in the courts of the sanctuary than a thousand days anywhere else on earth. David's statement is especially poignant, since he was in exile when he composed the psalm. The true child of God ever takes delight in participating in divine worship.

Doorkeeper. The psalmist would prefer to be a sanctuary servant rather than to enjoy honor among the wicked, estranged from God and the sanctuary.

11. Sun. God is the source of light, materially and spiritually (see Ps. 27:1; Isa. 60:19, 20; Mal. 4:2; Rev. 21:23; 22:25). The expression "Sun of righteousness" is applied to the Messiah (Mal. 4:2).

Shield. See on Ps. 3:3; cf. GC 673.

Grace and glory. The Christian finds inward grace here, in the kingdom of grace; outward glory there, in the kingdom of glory (see Rev. 21:11, 24).

No good thing. See Ps. 34:10; 1 Cor. 2:9; Eph. 3:20; Phil. 4:19.

Blessed. See on Ps. 1:1. The third and last blessing of the psalm falls upon those who, denied the privilege of dwelling in the courts of God, or making pilgrimage to the sanctuary, nevertheless worship God with the eye of faith, in spirit and in truth (see John 4:20–24), putting complete trust in Him. This blessing is the ultimate experience of the one who trusts in God for personal and present salvation. Compare the teachings of the apostle Paul on this subject as set forth in Gal. 2:20.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 EW 110; GW 257; 2T 223; 4T 534

7 CSW 49; RC 71; TM 425, 441; 1T 179; 2T 405; 5T 93; 9T 200

11 GC 673; MH 481; ML 102; MYP 123; SC 72; SR 102, 429; 1T 120; 9T 75

PSALM 85

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 85 consists of a thanksgiving for the deliverance of Israel from the captor (vs. 1–3); a prayer for more complete restoration (vs. 4–7); and a foretaste of the answer to the psalmist's prayer in the ultimate bestowal of spiritual and material blessings. There is insufficient evidence to tie the psalm to any particular date. Among the supreme personifications of the book of Psalms are the vivid images presented in Ps. 85:10–13. It is said that the psalm was a favorite of Oliver Cromwell's.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 627.

1. Been favourable. God had been pleased to turn the calamities of the Jews into blessings. The statement implies that the psalmist felt there were times when God had not been gracious (see Ps. 77:7–9).

Forgiven. Captivity came as a result of sin; God's remission of punishment was considered to be evidence that God had forgiven national sin.

Covered. See on Ps. 32:1.

Selah. See p. 629.

4. Turn. God has graciously turned toward His people. The psalmist's prayer now is that God will bring His people to repentance. We cannot turn of our own selves; we need the grace of God (see Ps. 80:3, 7, 19).

God of our salvation. See Ps. 27:9; 51:14.

To cease. Verbally this statement seems to contradict the statement of v. 3, but it may be understood as referring to the effects of God's anger. The captivity had been restored, but the land was still in a state of desolation.

5. To all generations. Literally, "from generation to generation."

6. Thou. God alone can revive His people.

Revive. Ezra prayed for "a little reviving in our bondage" (Ezra 9:8).

May rejoice. A revival of religion brings rejoicing (see Neh. 12:27).

In thee. Not in earthly blessings alone, but in God, the giver of all.

8. I will hear. The psalmist has expressed his sorrow and has prayed; now he will wait calmly, quietly, for an answer of peace. What God says to us is more important than what we say to Him.

Peace. Heb. *shalom*. Few Hebrew words are sweeter in their connotations than the word "peace" (see Ps. 29:11; 72:3, 7; 122:6–8; Num. 6:26; Isa. 9:6, 7; Zech. 6:13).

Saints. Heb. *chasidim* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36). The *chasidim* show their love for God by their way of life, and God shows His love to them (see Ps. 4:3).

Folly. If, after deliverance, Israel should return to her folly, her latter end would be still worse (see Matt. 12:45; John 5:14). Instead of "let them not turn again to folly," the LXX reads "to those who turn the heart unto him."

9. Glory. Here, evidently, the return of earthly glory and prosperity, as of old.

10. Mercy and truth. The exquisite example of synonymous parallelism displayed in this verse joins in each clause the two cardinal attributes of God's character (see Ps. 25:10; 72:3). In picturesque figures of personification the whole plan of salvation is epitomized (see 5T 633; PP 349; DA 762).

Have kissed. Justice and pardon, seemingly alienated from each other, embrace as loving friends (see DA 762).

11. Look down from heaven. To meet "truth" (cf. Ps. 85:10; Isa. 45:8).

12. Good. See Ps. 84:11.

13. Shall go before him. See Isa. 58:8. Righteousness is personified as preparing the way for restoration to divine favor (see Matt. 3:3).

Shall set us. Righteousness, as a herald, prepares the way for the coming of Jehovah, who brings salvation to His people.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

10 AH 311; CSW 171; DA 762, 834; Ev 292; GW 156; PP 349; 5T 633; 6T 60; 7T 209

PSALM 86

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 86 is a psalm of great beauty and sweetness, pervaded with a spirit of tender piety. It has no clear line of thought progression, but consists rather of an interrelated succession of outbursts of petition, praise, and gratitude. Its character suggests such varying moods as supplication, penitence, confession of faith, and praise. The psalm is especially note-worthy in giving reasons for prayer and for the surety of the answer to prayers.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 628.

1. Poor and needy. Our helplessness is the ground of our appeal to the great Helper (see Ps. 40:17; cf. Ps. 9:18; Luke 18:10–14; see on Matt. 5:3).

2. Holy. Heb. *chasid* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36). As a child may expect his parents to help him, so the psalmist has a right to expect God's help.

Trusteth in thee. Compare Ps. 34:22; 37:40; 57:1.

4. Rejoice. Or, "make glad." The psalmist's prayer goes beyond the cry for relief to a request for gladness of heart (see Ps. 16:11).

5. Plenteous in mercy. Compare Ex. 34:6, 7; Ps. 86:15. The psalmist bases his plea for help upon the essential attributes of God's character.

7. Thou wilt answer. The psalmist is assured that God hears and graciously answers prayer.

8. Among the gods. Compare Ps. 89:6; 95:3.

None like unto thee. See Ex. 15:11; cf. Isa. 40:18, 25.

Like unto thy works. See Deut. 3:24. Since in His character and power God is not to be compared with false gods, the psalmist reasons that God is able to deliver him from his distress.

9. All nations. See Ps. 22:27; 66:4; 72:11, 17; 82:8; Isa. 66:18, 23. The verse goes beyond a merely personal hope to a recognition of a worldwide missionary movement.

Glorify thy name. The heathen nations will leave their false gods and worship the true God.

10. Wondrous things. See Ps. 72:18; 77:13, 14; cf. Ps. 83:18.

Thou art God alone. See Deut. 6:4; 32:39; cf. 2 Kings 19:15; Isa. 37:16; 1 Cor. 8:4.

11. Teach me. See Ps. 25:4; 27:11; 119:33. The way of the Lord cannot be known intuitively; man must be taught as he sits at the feet of God and learns the lessons life has to offer.

In thy truth. Only when we are taught by God can we walk in His truth (see Ps. 26:3).

Unite my heart. Compare Jer. 32:39; Deut. 6:5; 10:12; Matt. 6:21–23. The psalmist prays for unity of purpose. Let nothing interfere, he prays in effect, with that one supreme purpose (see Ps. 57:7). The phrase anticipates the words "with all my heart" of v. 12. A divided heart can never render acceptable service to God (see on Matt. 6:24).

12. Praise thee. See Ps. 9:1; 145:1, 2.

My heart. See on v. 11.

13. Thy mercy. See Ps. 57:10; 103:11.

Delivered. See Ps. 56:13; 116:8.

My soul. "Me" (see on Ps. 16:10).

Hell. Heb. *she'ol* (see on Prov. 15:11). In this hyperbole the psalmist expresses the horror, the gloom, of the condition from which God had delivered him (see Deut. 32:22).

14. The proud. Compare Ps. 54:3; Ps. 119:51, 69, 85, 122.

Before them. These wicked men have no regard for God, and no respect for His presence in their lives (see Ps. 10:4).

15. Full of compassion. The psalmist appeals to God on the ground of God's glorious character (see on v. 5). By the very nature of His character God cannot desert a soul in need. This address to God introduces the earnest prayer recorded in vs. 16, 17.

16. Turn. See Ps. 85:3, 4; cf. Ps. 25:16.

Thy strength. Compare Ps. 71:16; 2 Cor. 12:9.

The son of thine handmaid. The poet's tender allusion to his mother (see Ps. 116:16; cf. 2 Tim. 1:5). Possibly there is in this verse a suggestion of the psalmist's hope that God will remember and answer the prayers of a devout mother for her son.

17. A token. The psalmist prays for some evidence that God is dealing with him for his good, so that even his enemies will acknowledge that God is on his side.

For good. Compare Neh. 5:19; 13:31; Jer. 21:10; 24:6; 44:27.

Be ashamed. See Ps. 6:10; 119:78. If deliverance came, it would prove that God was on the psalmist's side, and against his enemies.

Comforted. The psalm closes on an intimate note of quiet satisfaction.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 ML 205
12 PK 70
15 PK 311

PSALM 87

INTRODUCTION.—Some commentators have seen in this psalm a depiction of the city of Zion as the capital of God's universal kingdom, citizens of all nations being reborn

into its citizenship. It is doubtful whether the somewhat obscure language of the psalm can be interpreted in this way (see on v. 4). The poem has two short stanzas of three verses each, followed by a lyric conclusion that consists of a single verse.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 627.

1. His foundation. That is, Zion, which God founded and where He "dwells" (see Isa. 14:32).

Holy mountains. Jerusalem is encircled by hills; in the city itself are the hills of Zion and Moriah (see on Ps. 48:2; cf. Ps. 133:3).

2. Gates of Zion. The gates of a city were the places where business was transacted, where courts were held, where the pulse of human activity was felt (see Ps. 9:14; 122:2; Isa. 29:21). By figure, "gates" represent the entire city. God beheld with great pleasure the multitudes pressing through the gates on their way to Zion.

Dwellings. Perhaps the various places where the Hebrews lived; or, specifically, the various places where the ark had reposed before it was brought to Jerusalem by David.

3. City of God. See Ps. 46:4; 48:1.

Selah. See p. 629.

4. Rahab. A poetical designation for Egypt (see Isa. 30:7, RSV). The context, uniting "Rahab" with "Babylon," clarifies the reference to Egypt: the two nations were equally proud and arrogant in their antagonism to Israel.

Philistia, and Tyre. See Ps. 83:7; cf. Ps. 68:31.

This man was born there. Some commentators contend that the adverb "there" designates Zion; hence the interpretation that represents Zion as the capital of a universal kingdom (see Introduction to Ps. 87). It seems more natural to apply the adverb to the places mentioned in the immediately preceding context: Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia. Such an application is clearly seen in the following paraphrase of v. 4: "I will mention Egypt and Babylon to my intimates; look at Philistia, Tyre, or even Ethiopia. So-and-So was born there." The psalmist seems to be emphasizing that beyond the fondest patriotism of the natives of these lands is the privilege of being a native of Zion. The whole psalm appears to be a grand eulogy on the Holy City as a birthplace.

5. In her. Citizenship in Zion is presented as the supreme privilege.

Establish her. See Ps. 48:8.

6. Shall count. A beautiful picture further emphasizing the cherished privilege of being able to record Zion as one's birthplace.

Selah. See p. 629.

7. Players on instruments. Heb. *cholelim*, "dancers." On dancing as a factor in religious worship, see Ex. 15:20; see on 2 Sam. 6:14.

All my springs. Milton paraphrased this verse:

"Both they who sing and they who dance
With sacred songs are there;
In thee fresh brooks and soft streams glance,
And all my fountains clear."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

7 Ed 307; PK 730

PSALM 88

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 88 has been called the most mournful and despondent of the psalms. This psalm, attributed to David (PK 341), was probably composed at a time of

most grievous physical and mental suffering. There is in it not a single ray of hope (except in the trustful address: "O Lord God of my salvation"). It is one long wail of undiluted sorrow, concluding with the word "darkness." David suffers, fears death, prays for relief, but shows no expectation of receiving the answer to his prayer. Nevertheless, he holds serenely on to God and continues to pray in simple faith that God will hear (vs. 1, 2, 9, 13).

On the superscription see pp. 617, 629.

1. Of my salvation. This seems to be the only ray of light in the entire psalm. Despite the overwhelming gloom of the psalm, David trusts in God as his Saviour. A child of God should never come to the place where he gives up in despair.

3. Of troubles. See Job 10:15; Ps. 123:4. The tone of the psalm resembles the complaints of Job in the first chapters of the book of Job.

Grave. Heb. *she'ol* (see on Prov. 15:11). The psalmist urges his extremity as the reason for God's hearing him. Sick unto death, Hezekiah could plead as did David (see PK 340, 341).

4. Pit. See on Ps. 28:1.

5. Among the dead. That is, the psalmist was counted as though dead.

Thou rememberest no more. In his gloom the psalmist comes to feel that God forgets a man when he lies down to sleep the sleep of death.

From thy hand. Or, "from Thy power," the hand being the symbol of power.

7. Thy wrath. David considers his suffering the result of God's anger (see on Ps. 38:3).

All thy waves. See on Ps. 42:7.

Selah. See on p. 629.

8. Put away. See v. 18; cf. Ps. 31:11; 38:11; 69:8; Job 19:13–17.

An abomination. That is, something to be detested, abhorred, and therefore shunned, as unclean.

Shut up. Presumably as unclean, or suspected of being unclean (see Lev. 13).

10. Dead. Heb. *repha'im* (see on Job 26:5). In Ugaritic (see p. 618) *rphwm* also means "dead." The psalmist seems to reason thus with God: Why dost Thou condemn me to death when Thy power and goodness cannot be demonstrated in the grave (see Job 10:21, 22)?

Selah. See p. 629.

11. Lovingkindness. Dead men cannot appreciate the attributes of God. Only the living can praise God for His love (see Ps. 89:1).

Destruction. Heb. *'abaddon* (see on Job 26:6).

12. Land of forgetfulness. A land of oblivion, where the dead neither remember nor are remembered.

13. Have I cried. The psalmist returns, as it were, to the realization that he is not in the grave, but still in the living flesh. Though on the edge of the grave, he will continue to pray for God to come to his rescue.

In the morning. See on Ps. 5:3.

14. My soul. Or, "me" (see on Ps. 16:10). Unaware of grievous sin, he cannot understand why he should have to suffer so heavily.

Why hidest thou? See on Ps. 13:1. It seems to David that God has deliberately turned His attention away from him in his distress.

15. From my youth up. This phrase may imply that the psalmist was smitten at an early age and has suffered for many years, or it may be the hyperbolic language of deep emotion: his suffering is so intense that his remembrance of it seems to go back to his youth.

17. Like water. The psalmist is like a man about to drown (see Ps. 42:7).

18. Lover and friend. Compare v. 8. The psalmist repeats his complaint as a last pathetic note in his song. Even those to whom he had a right to look for help and sympathy in his plight have deserted him (see Job 19:13–21).

It is well to note, despite the hopelessness of the psalm, that David confesses God as his Saviour (v. 1); acknowledges His loving-kindness, faithfulness, strength, and righteousness (vs. 10–12); and continues to pray (v. 13). We may be sure that, although the psalm closes in darkness, light eventually broke forth and all was well (see Job 5:18; 13:15). The psalm is a supreme example of perfect faith: though David sees no release, he remains firm in God.

Mine acquaintance. In the poetic parallelism of v. 18 these words stand as the counterpart of "lover and friend." An "acquaintance," presumably, would be on less intimate terms than a "lover and friend"; yet David mourns the loss of the friendship of even those who are not his most intimate associates.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2, 3 PK 341

PSALM 89

[19]

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 89 has been called The Psalm of the Covenant. It recalls the promise that David's throne was to be established forever and then expresses concern over the fact that God has apparently broken the covenant. The psalm falls naturally into two contrasting parts, the abrupt change from vs. 1–37 to vs. 38–52 being marked by the word "but." Within the two larger divisions the following ideas occur: the keynote of praise (vs. 1–4), praise to God for His greatness and for His promises (vs. 15–37), complaint in view of the apparent failure of God's promises (vs. 38–45), plea for fulfillment of the promises and restoration to God's favor (vs. 46–51), doxology and double Amen (v. 52).

The unity of this psalm is seen by the recurrence of the words "faithfulness," "mercy," and "lovingkindness" (vs. 1, 2, 5, 8, 14, 24, 28, 33, 49), and the word "covenant" (vs. 3, 28, 34, 39).

On the superscription see pp. 617, 628.

1. Mercies. Heb. *chasadim* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

2. Built up. The psalmist seems certain that, despite present appearances, the promise made to David will ultimately be carried out. Like a well-built palace, it will stand forever.

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[19]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 74:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

4. Thy seed. See 2 Sam. 7:12, 13; cf. 1 Kings 2:4; Luke 1:32, 33. David's literal descendants failed, but the glorious promises made to David and his house find their ultimate fulfillment in Christ (see PP 754, 755; see also Vol. IV, pp. 30–36).

Selah. See p. 629.

5. The heavens. Here, by figure, a designation for the inhabitants of heaven.

Wonders. See Ps. 88:10, 12.

6. For who? The rhetorical questions of this verse forcefully express the idea that God, the Author of the covenant, is supreme above all others.

Sons of the mighty. Possibly the angels, as indicated by the succession of parallelisms, and by the general sense of the passage (see on Ps. 29:1 cf. Ps. 103:20).

7. Assembly of the saints. Or, "council of the holy ones," that is, the angels. This continues the parallels begun in v. 5.

9. The raging of the sea. Singularly impressive is the power that God holds over the raging waves of the sea (see Job 38:8–11; Ps. 65:7; 107:23–30; Matt. 8:26, 27). Equally impressive should be His power over the waves of trouble and affliction sweeping over our heads, which He stills so that not a ripple of distress disturbs our peace of soul.

10. Rahab. Here symbolically used for Egypt (see on Ps. 87:4).

Scattered. See Ex. 14:27–31; 15:6; cf. Num. 10:35.

11. Are thine. Compare Ps. 8:3; 24:1, 2; 33:6, 9; 115:16. God is Creator and therefore Owner.

12. Tabor. A mountain of about 1,829 ft. (561.7 m.) elevation, 12 mi. (19.2 km.) west of the point where the Jordan River leaves the Sea of Galilee (see on Judges 4:6).

Hermon. A mountain north of Palestine rising to an elevation of 9,232 ft.

14. Habitation. Or, "foundation." The throne of God is established upon the principles of righteousness and justice (see Isa. 16:5; cf. Ps. 97:2).

Mercy and truth. See on Ps. 85:10; cf. Ps. 25:10; 26:3.

Shall go before. Or, "precede". Wherever God goes, His mercy and truth accompany Him. It is said that after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, when the wrong word spoken might have provoked massacre, James Garfield cried to the excited mob: "Fellow Citizens, 'Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne.'"

Blessed. See on Ps. 1:1.

Countenance. Blessed are they who bask in the light of God's smile (see Num. 6:25, 26).

"Jesus, the very thought of Thee,
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest."

17. Glory. Their strength gets its beauty from God.

Horn. A symbol of strength (see on Ps. 18:2; cf. 1 Sam. 2:1; Ps. 92:10; Ps. 112:9).

18. Defence. Heb. *magen*, usually translated "shield." It may also mean "entreaty," as the Ugaritic (see p. 618) has shown. The first half of the verse may be translated, "For the Lord is our supplication."

19. Then. Evidently referring to the events recorded in 2 Sam. 7:8–17.

In vision. See 2 Sam. 7:4–8.

Thy holy one. Probably Nathan, to whom the revelation was made (see 2 Sam. 7:4, 17).

Saidst. From this point to the close of v. 37 the psalmist records the message of the vision, not verbatim, but with rhetorical coloring.

Laid help. God gave David capacity for the tasks to which he was being called. God's "bidding are enablings" (COL 333).

Out of the people. See 1 Sam. 16:1–13. God chose David from among the ranks of the common people, not from the nobility. All the more apparent was it therefore that his power came from God (see 2 Sam. 7:8; Ps. 78:70–72).

20. Found David. See Acts 13:22.

21. Strengthen him. God was David's constant aid and protection (see 1 Sam. 18:12, 14; 2 Sam. 5:10; 7:9).

22. Exact upon him. Or, "beguile him."

25. The sea. See Ps. 72:8; 80:11.

The rivers. God's promise to Abraham is comprehended in the words of this verse (see Gen. 15:18; see on Ex. 23:31).

26. My father. The relation between David and God is tenderly stated in this verse. David calls God by names that show intimacy and confidence; he is completely dependent on God, his Father, and his Saviour (see 2 Sam. 7:14; 22:2, 3, 47; cf. Deut. 32:15).

27. My firstborn. As David calls God Father, so God considers David His firstborn son. David was the first from whom a line of royal descendants was to extend to the Messiah (see Ex. 4:22; Jer. 31:9).

Higher. See Num. 24:7.

28. My covenant. See Isa. 55:3; cf. Ps. 89:33–37. The literal descendants of David broke the covenant, but the promises will be fulfilled in Christ (see on 2 Sam. 7:14–16; 23:5).

29. Endure for ever. See 2 Sam. 7:12, 16. If David's line had remained true to God, this promise would have had literal fulfillment. This prediction will now have its fulfillment in Christ, the Seed of David, and in the spiritual Israel.

30. Forsake my law. David's son, Solomon, began to forsake God's law (see 1 Kings 11:1–8). Many of the kings that followed him "did evil in the sight of the Lord."

32. Will I visit. Such punishment is a necessary part of the Father's discipline of His children (see Heb. 12:6–11). God's punishments in this life are salutary, conducted with the object of reclaiming the erring.

33. To fail. God cannot be untrue to Himself. His faithfulness was pledged in His covenant. There was born of the house of David in the city of David, the Messiah, in whom the promise made to David finds its ultimate fulfillment (see 2 Sam. 7:15, 16; 1 Kings 11:12, 13, 34–39; 15:4, 5).

34. Nor alter. God cannot alter His character (see James 1:17; Mal. 3:6; cf. Ps. 111:5, 9).

35. By my holiness. In the covenant God pledged His own holy nature. If God should fail in His part of the agreement, it would prove that God is not a holy God.

I will not lie. God's faithfulness to David is but a sublime instance of His constant faithfulness in dealing with His children (see vs. 3, 4).

36. Endure for ever. See on v. 29.

As the sun. See Ps. 72:5, 17.

37. As the moon. See Ps. 72:5.

A faithful witness. Here probably the moon, as indicated by the parallelism of the clauses. As the moon is fixed, regular, and enduring, so God's promises to David cannot fail.

With this verse the psalmist closes his praise of the attributes of God, on which the fulfillment of the promise depends.

Selah. See p. 629.

38. But. At this point in the psalm there is an abrupt change from praise and rejoicing to complaint and mourning. Despite the surety of God's promises and the pledge of His faithfulness, it seems that the covenant has been broken and that not good, but only evil, has come upon Israel and the Lord's anointed. How is this? the psalmist inquiries. What will be the outcome? Is God's faithfulness failing? Verses 38–45 are a series of expostulations (see on Ps. 44:9–22). The psalmist sets forth the apparent facts, but through faith triumphs over appearances.

Thou. The pronoun in the Hebrew is emphatic, as if the psalmist were saying, Thou, the God who hast pledged faithfulness in the covenant relationship, art the same God who has falsified His promise and rejected His anointed.

40. All his hedges. All the king's walls and fortifications have been destroyed (see Ps. 80:12; 2 Chron. 11:5–10; cf. Isa. 5:5, 6).

41. Spoil him. Compare 2 Kings 24:2.

Reproach. Compare Neh. 1:3; 2:17; see Ps. 79:4.

42. To rejoice. Every fall of Israel caused the enemies to rejoice.

43. Turned the edge. That is, turned the edge of the sword away, so that when the sword descended to strike, it did not cut the object aimed at. Israel had been unsuccessful in battle.

45. Hast thou shortened. His youthful vigor has been cut short. The king's period of prosperity has been diminished.

With shame. The royal line had been reduced to disgrace. Everything in the appearance and circumstances of the king seems to indicate God's displeasure.

Selah. See p. 629.

46. How long, Lord? The expostulation of the psalmist gives way to pleading. He pleads with God for surcease of trouble. This transition is the key to our understanding of the psalmist's expostulation. Here the frail human spirit, sensing the wrong state of affairs, appeals to God to set things right. The pleading consists of two strains of three verses each. Verses 46–48 argue the shortness of human life; vs. 49–51, the dishonor that comes upon God when His enemies gain the victory.

47. My time. Heb. *cheled*, "duration of life." The psalmist pleads that if God is ever to interpose, He must do so quickly, for the psalmist will soon pass away.

In vain. Compare Job 7:6; 14:1; Ps. 39:5, 11.

49. Thy former lovingkindnesses. That is, the manifold proofs of the fulfillment of the promise in ancient times.

Swarest. See vs. 3, 35; cf. Ps. 132:11.

50. In my bosom. The psalmist seems to carry on his heart the reproaches of all Israel. Like Moses (see Num. 11:11–15), the psalmist felt that the burdens of all his people rested upon him, and that he was no longer able to bear their weight.

52. Blessed. The doxology and double Amen (not essential parts of the psalm itself) mark the close of Book Three of the Psalter (see p. 626; see on Ps. 41:13; 72:18; 106:48;

150). However, there is singular appropriateness to the message of the verse at this point: in spite of all, "Blessed be the Lord!"

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3–29PP 755
5–7SL 56
7 CG 538; ML 281; MYP 265; PK 236; 5T 268, 320
13–18PP 33
14 PP 34; 2T 448
14, 15 5T 190
15 Ev 121; TM 111; 8T 145
19 MYP 59; 1T 698; 2T 321; 5T 312; 9T 280
31–33PP 738
33 8T 276
34 FE 450; PK 165, 187; 8T 10, 39
37 GC 262

BOOK FOUR

PSALM 90

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 90 has been described as a melody of God's power and purpose, with undertones decrying the frailty and transitoriness of man. It is probably the most magnificent poem ever written on the vanity of human life, in the light of the poet's vivid faith in the promises of God. Isaac Taylor called Ps. 90 "the most sublime of human compositions, the deepest in feeling, the loftiest in theological conceptions, the most magnificent in its imagery." Nations and men may change, grow old, and perish; God remains unchangeable, eternal in His majesty. "Satisfaction, gladness, success in work must all come from the right relation of man in his frailty to the eternal Lord" (G. Campbell Morgan).

Ruggedness of style, "the stamp of high antiquity," vastness of theme, frequent identity with the language of Deuteronomy—these elements help to support the view that Moses was the author of Ps. 90.

On the superscription see pp. 617, 628.

1. Lord. Heb. *'Adonai* (see Vol. I, p. 173).

Dwelling place. Heb. *ma'on*, "dwelling", or "habitation" (see Deut. 26:15; Ps. 26:8; 68:5; 91:9).

2. Mountains. Compare Prov. 8:25, 26.

From everlasting to everlasting. God is from eternity in the past to eternity in the future (see Ps. 93:2; Prov. 8:23; Micah 5:2; Hab. 1:12). He is "the Ancient of days" (Dan. 7:9). There could not be a more sublime statement of the eternity of God. The man who recognizes the eternity of God and regards his own life as related to the Eternal, has a powerful stimulus to dignified, worthy living.

3. Man. Heb. *'enosh*, "man in his frailty" (see on Ps. 8:4).

Destruction. Heb. *dakka'*, "crushed," translated "contrite" in Ps. 34:18; Isa. 57:15; here possibly meaning crushed matter like dust.

Return. Seemingly a reference to death. There is no more sobering thought than this, that all, regardless of rank, nationality, wealth, or other mark of distinction, must die.

4. A thousand years. The passing of time means nothing to the eternal God. Even the life of a Methuselah (see Gen. 5:27) would be, in comparison with the eternity of God, but as a single day; yes, as a yesterday, which, when it has passed, seems still shorter to our recollection (see 2 Peter 3:8).

A watch. The idea of the first clause is intensified: a thousand years to God are no more than a division of a single night. Note the rapid succession of images in vs. 4–6.

5. Like grass. See Ps. 37:2; 72:16; 103:15; Isa. 40:7; James 1:10, 11.

7. We are consumed. Passing from the generalizations of the eternity of God and the transitory life of man, the psalmist proceeds to present the weakness and sins of himself and his people as the reason for God's displeasure.

8. Secret sins. The sins of the heart, which we have tried to hide from the eyes of men; or perhaps the sin that we have forgotten.

9. Tale. Heb. *hegeh*, "whispering," "moaning." The phrase "that is told" is supplied in the KJV. Life passes with the rapidity of a sigh; thought no sooner comes than it is gone. So unsubstantial is life!

10. The days of our years. Compare the phrase in Gen. 25:7; 47:9. The psalmist seems to be defining the ordinary span of life. There were doubtless many exceptions to the general rule.

By reason of strength. Because of exceptional vigor.

Labour. Heb. *'amal*, "wearisome toil" (see Job 5:7).

Sorrow. Heb. *'awen*, "trouble," "weariness," "sin," "crime," "deceit" (see Prov. 22:8; Isa. 41:29). Mere lengthening of life does not guarantee happiness (see Eccl. 12:1).

We fly away. Even if life is prolonged to the age of 80, it seems but a short time, and we fly away as in a dream (see Job 20:8). The words come with special significance from a man standing on the very verge of death and looking back over the days of his pilgrimage.

11. Who knoweth?

"Not now, but in the coming years,
It may be in the better land,
We'll read the meaning of our tears,
And there, sometime, we'll understand."

12. Apply our hearts unto wisdom. Or, "get a heart of wisdom." Only God sees the end from the beginning, but we should pray for grace to act as if we saw that end. We need to meditate on life's brevity, that we may be wise in employing the time that God allots us.

13. How long? See Ps. 6:3, 4; 13:1.

Repent thee. The psalmist is using the language of men. God does not repent as men repent, but God appears to repent, by withdrawing His judgments, by showing mercy where only punishment could be expected (see on Num. 23:19).

14. Early. Literally, "in the morning." The psalmist prays that after a night of sorrow and suffering, God will give a morning of joy and peace (see Ps. 143:8).

16. Thy work. That is, God's acts of mercy, His acts of interposition, His providences.

17. Beauty. Heb. *no'am*, "kindness" (see Ps. 27:4). When we see the loveliness of the character of God, we are "transfigured by His grace" (see Ed 80; MB 95), and "the beauty of the Lord our God" is "upon us."

The work of our hands. The ordinary tasks of daily life, as well as the professional and vocational duties of our livelihood. The repetition of the prayer makes more emphatic the psalmist's desire that God will help them to carry out the work in such a way that they may be blessed of Him.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 GC 479; MM 92
2–6, 12, 14–17 8T 270
17 CT 431; Ed 80, 303; GC 645; MB 95; ML 270

PSALM 91

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 91 contains a message of comfort for all who pass through times of trouble, and especially for "God's commandment-keeping people" (see 8T 120) and for those who shall experience "the time of trouble" and the perils of the last days (see Ed 181; PP 110; PK 538; GC 630; 8T 120, 121). The psalm has for its theme the security of the one who puts his trust in God. The shift in pronouns in vs. 1–13 is probably accounted for by the liturgical use to which this psalm was probably put, its several parts being chanted in the worship service by solo voices, or voices answering each other antiphonally. The psalm may be compared with Eliphaz' description of the good man's life (see Job 5:17–26), but is more sublime (see Prov. 3:21–26).

1. Dwelleth. The idea is that of quiet repose as in a dwelling.

Secret place. When we are "admitted into closest intimacy and communion with God" (MB 188), we may be said to dwell "in the secret place of the most High."

Most High. Heb. *'Elyon*. See Vol. I, pp. 170–173, on this name for God, and on the three other names employed in vs. 1, 2: "Almighty" (*Shaddai*), "Lord" (*Yahweh*), "God" (*'Elohim*).

Under the shadow. See on Ps. 17:8.

Verses 1, 4 will bring special comfort to those who heed God's warning in "the day of the Lord" (see PP 167).

2. I. The psalmist makes this sentiment the special personal expression of the satisfaction of his need.

Refuge. See Ps. 18:2; 144:2.

Will I trust. See Ps. 31:6; 55:23. "In God we trust" is the motto minted on coins of the United States of America.

3. Surely he. Emphatic in the Hebrew.

Snare. See Ps. 124:7. Satan sets many snares for the children of God.

Noisome pestilence. Literally, "plague of destructions." In the time of trouble "the people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation, and suffer for want of food, they will not be left to perish" (GC 629).

4. Shield. Heb. *sinnah* (see on Ps. 5:12).

6. Pestilence. Heb. *deber*, "plague," personified as walking abroad in the dark of the night, when its movements cannot be detected.

Destruction. Heb. *qeteb*, possibly the name of some disease. Protecting men from such evils is the work of the angels (DA 348; AA 153).

7. A thousand … ten thousand. Poetic use of large round numbers for rhetorical effect. The Hebrew word translated "ten thousand" sometimes signifies merely an unspecified large number. In Ugaritic (see p. 618) this word is also often used in parallel constructions with "thousand," and simply denotes large numbers. No calculation should be made from such figurative use of numbers.

Nigh thee. Whatever danger there may be, it will not touch the one whose confidence is in God. Under the protection of God, he is safe. This is the conviction that gives a man the steady eye of faith in his hour of supreme danger.

8. With thine eyes. You will see the punishment of the wicked, but experience no part in it (see Ps. 37:34). The Israelites had looked on as the Egyptians perished in the Red Sea (see Ex. 14:31); in the land of Goshen they had watched the calamities that fell upon the Egyptians.

9. Most High. See on v. 1.

Habitation. See on Ps. 90:1.

11. Angels. See Ps. 34:7; Gen. 24:7, 40; cf. Heb. 1:14. God's faithful children are under the constant care of the angels (see DA 240; GC 512, 513; MH 105; 6T 366, 367).

In all thy ways. Compare Satan's use of this scripture in the wilderness temptation of Christ (Matt. 4:6; Luke 4:10, 11).

12. Bear thee. Compare Prov. 3:23, 24.

13. Lion. Figurative for a violent foe.

Adder. Heb. *pethen*, a species of poisonous snake (see Deut. 32:33; Job 20:14, 16; Isa. 11:8 for other occurrences of *pethen*).

Dragon. See on Ps. 74:13. The word probably denotes a sea monster. He who trusts God is safe in the midst of the most fearful dangers, as if he were walking unharmed amid venomous serpents.

14. Set his love. By an abrupt and dramatic change, God becomes the Speaker; as if it were not enough for His children to encourage one another (as in vs. 1–13), God now speaks in His own Person and stamps on the psalm the seal of His own promise (see Ps. 50:15, 23).

Will I deliver him. God's ratification of the profession of His servants as expressed in vs. 3, 7, 10–13.

Name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17. Knowing God's name implies faith and trust in Him.

15. I will answer. Compare Isa. 65:24.

In trouble. See Ps. 46:1; cf. Deut. 4:7; Isa. 43:2.

16. Will I satisfy him. The ultimate satisfaction that God promises will be life in His presence (see Ps. 17:15). Nothing less than this can satisfy the human heart.

My salvation. True religion blesses a man in this life and in the life to come (see 1 Tim. 4:8). In view of the eternal satisfaction that God promises, how can we spend our energies for merely transient, petty earthly gains and hardly move a finger to secure the fulfillment of the promises?

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–16 8T 120

1 AH 274; CH 362; MB 188; PP 167

1, 2 4T 525
3–10GC 630
4 PP 167
6 AA 153; DA 348
9, 10 Ed 181; PK 538; PP 110
11 EW 271; FE 177; GC 517, 560, 629; ML 31, 56, 160, 302; PP 256; Te 35, 286; 3T 363 (see under Ps. 34:7)
14 PP 110
16 COL 289; PP 167

PSALM 92

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 92 is a liturgical anthem celebrating the destruction of evil and the triumph and happiness of God's faithful children. The psalm was inspired by the poet's communion with the Creator on the Sabbath day and his observation of God's power in nature (see DA 281, 282). Tradition says that it was sung by the Levites in the morning at the time of the drink offering, on the offering of the first lamb (see Num. 28:3–9). It is one of the psalms in the Sephardic liturgy. On the Sabbath it is well that we turn our eyes from the perplexing questions of this world to the eternal world, where we shall be above all doubt and perplexity.

On the superscription see p. 627.

1. To sing praises. Praise is especially appropriate on the Sabbath day (see Ed 251).

Name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17.

Most High. Heb. *'Elyon* (see Vol. I, p. 173).

2. In the morning. See on Ps. 5:3; cf. Lam. 3:23; SC 74, 75.

Every night. Literally, "in the nights" (see on Ps. 4:4; cf. Ps. 16:7). The Mosaic law provided for worship morning and evening by the establishment of the morning and evening sacrifice (see Ex. 29:38, 39).

3. Upon an instrument. See on Ps. 33:2; cf. Ps. 57:8. The verse suggests the use of the psalm in public worship. Instruments were probably not generally used in private devotions.

4. Through thy work. Either the work of creation, celebrated by the Sabbath institution (see DA 282), or God's works in general, or some particular demonstration of God's power.

I will triumph. Or, "I will cry for joy."

5. Thy works. See on Ps. 40:5.

Thoughts. God's purposes, His designs, as revealed in creation and in His continual providences, are beyond the comprehension of man (see Isa. 55:8, 9; Rom. 11:33, 34; cf. 1 Cor. 2:9).

6. A brutish man. Men, rude, uncultivated, stupid, dull of perception, cannot understand.

7. As the grass. The problem that disturbed Job (Job 21:7–21) and that appears so often in the Psalms (see Ps. 73:2–15) does not disturb the author of this psalm. It is stated and immediately solved in the realization that the destruction of the wicked follows their triumph (see Ps. 73:18–20). Destruction is the natural and inevitable result of wickedness.

8. Art most high. God, unaffected by the prosperity or downfall of the wicked, remains enthroned on high (see Ed 173; MH 417).

9. Shall perish. The repetition of the phrase "for, lo, thine enemies" lends emphasis to the idea that, since God must be exalted, the wicked must perish.

Workers of iniquity. See v. 7.

10. Horn. A symbol of strength (see Deut. 33:17). The psalmist had such confidence in his friendship with God that he trusted God to lift him up.

Unicorn. A wild ox (see on Job. 39:9).

Fresh oil. Not oil that is old and rancid (see Ps. 23:5).

12. Shall flourish. See Ps. 1:3; Ps. 52:8; Hosea 14:5, 6; MH 286.

Like the palm tree. The palm was celebrated for its ability to remain green through winter and summer alike (see S. of Sol. 7:8; Jer. 10:5). Note the contrast with vs. 7, 9, 11.

Like a cedar. See Ps. 29:5; 104:16, 17; see 5T 514, 515.

14. In old age. The righteous will continue to be productive and glorify God by their good works. Old age may be the most fruitful part of a man's life. The years of retirement may be the most productive.

Fat and flourishing. They will be healthy and vigorous. The metaphor begun in v. 12 is sustained.

15. To shew. The fact that the old age of the righteous is happy and productive proves the faithfulness of God, and shows that He keeps His promises.

No unrighteousness. The last two clauses of the verse probably depend upon the first clause of the verse, "to shew that the Lord is upright."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–48T 12
2 ML 200
4 MH 463
4, 5 DA 282
12 Ed 116; PP 450; 5T 514
12–14MH 286
13 2T 466

PSALM 93

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 93 celebrates Jehovah as Sovereign of the universe. It is a picture of the magnificent enthronement of Deity upon a throne established from everlasting to everlasting. The psalm is the first of a series of royal psalms (Ps. 93 to Ps. 101) glorifying God as Creator and Lord. Ps. 93 shows His power in control of creation, in the overthrow of His enemies, in the faithfulness of His word, and in the holiness of His house. The LXX includes in its superscription the phrase, "for the day before the Sabbath."

1. Stablished. An archaic word for "established."

2. Everlasting. See Ps. 90:1, 2; 8T 270.

3. The floods. Or, "rivers." Waters here may represent peoples, invading hosts (see Isa. 8:7, 8). Or the psalmist may be glorifying God as omnipotent above His creation.

4. Is mightier. Verse 4, the answer to v. 3, may have been sung antiphonally.

5. For ever. Only eternity will be ample enough to show that holiness characterizes the rule of God's house. Holiness is the characteristic of divine sovereignty. Only in eternity will finite mortals begin to understand the infinite characteristics of Deity.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 8T 271

PSALM 94

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 94 appeals to God for an answer to the problem of the apparent triumph of the wicked (vs. 1–7), addresses unjust leaders who boast of God's apparent aloofness from the problem (vs. 8–11), and finds an ultimate answer in God's defense of the righteous and the final triumph of the right (vs. 12–23). The psalm is a guarantee that, despite appearances, justice will ultimately prevail (see Ps. 92). The LXX has in the superscription the phrase, "for the fourth day of the week." Ps. 94 has the earmarks of a liturgical psalm.

1. Vengeance belongeth. The plea is repeated, emphasizing its earnestness.

Shew thyself. Heb. *yapha'*, "shine forth with splendor" (see Ps. 50:2; Ps. 80:1).

2. Lift up thyself. See Ps. 7:6.

Judge of the earth. See Gen. 18:25; Ps. 58:11.

Render a reward. See Ps. 28:4; Lam. 3:64.

3. How long? See Ps. 6:3; 13:1. Weary with the apparent supremacy of evil, the psalmist wonders why God is so slow in manifesting Himself.

5. Break in pieces. Or, "crush" (see Lam. 3:34; cf. Prov. 22:22; Isa. 3:15).

6. Slay the widow. The crimes referred to in this verse are peculiarly detestable, because these persons are feeble and unprotected (see Ps. 68:5; Ps. 82:3; Ex. 22:22–24; Deut. 10:18). The language seems to indicate that the oppressors are within the commonwealth of Israel.

7. They say. Not necessarily vocally, but by their conduct (see Ps. 10:11, 13).

The Lord. Heb. *Yah* (see on Ps. 68:4).

Shall not see. Verse 7 concludes the complaint and cry for recompense (see Ps. 14:1, 2).

8. Brutish. See Ps. 92:6; cf. Rom. 3:11.

11. Thoughts. See Ps. 7:9; 26:2; cf. 1 Cor. 3:20.

They. Masculine in the Hebrew and hence cannot refer to "thoughts," which is feminine; men themselves are "vanity."

Vanity. See Ps. 39:5, 6; cf. Eccl. 2:14, 15.

12. Blessed. See on Ps. 1:1. At first glance, this may appear to be a strange beatitude! Verses 12–19 present a remarkable galaxy of blessings that God bestows upon the righteous. He chastens, instructs, gives rest, never forsakes, judges righteously, helps against evil men, upholds in time of danger, and comforts (see Eph. 3:20). The experience of the psalmist seems to reinforce these statements of divine principle.

Chastenest. Heb. *yasar*, "discipline," "correct," "instruct," "chastise." See Deut. 8:5; Job 5:17; Ps. 89:32, 33; 119:71; cf. Job 33:15–30. If the Christian accepts discipline, he is happy! One of the chief values of chastening is that it gives the afflicted fuller sympathy with others.

Law. Heb. *torah* (see on Prov. 3:1).

13. Give him rest. Quietness and peace of mind are the result of accepting God's way of life.

Days of adversity. See Ps. 49:5.

14. Not cast off. However long God's chastising may persist, His faithful children may rest in the assurance that God will not forsake them (see Deut. 31:6; 1 Sam. 12:22; Ps. 37:28; Rom. 11:1, 2).

15. Shall return. Justice will once more conform to the eternal principles of God's character and government.

Shall follow it. The upright will avow openly their allegiance to justice.

16. For me. In vs. 16–19 the psalmist apparently records his own experience, beginning his personal application with a question (v. 16), which he answers in vs. 17–19.

17. My soul. Or, "I" (see on Ps. 16:10).

In silence. That is, in death (see Ps. 31:17, 18; cf. Ps. 115:17).

19. Thoughts. Heb. *śar'appim*, "disquieting thoughts" (see Matt. 6:25–34; DA 313; MB 141–146).

Comforts. A firm trust in God removes anxious thoughts and replaces them with "comfortable thoughts."

Delight. God's comforts give peace and calm assurance (see Ps. 63:5, 6; 2 Cor. 1:3, 4; 1 Peter 5:7).

My soul. Or, "me" (see on Ps. 16:10).

20. Have fellowship. The rhetorical question demands a negative answer. The questions of vs. 3, 4 are satisfactorily answered in the destruction of the wicked.

Thee. God.

By a law. By legal statute, by court decree, they accomplish their nefarious purposes (see 1 Kings 21:10–13).

21. Soul. See on Ps. 16:10.

Condemn the innocent. See Ps. 10:8; cf. Matt. 27:4.

22. My defence. See Ps. 18:2.

23. Their own iniquity. See Ps. 7:16; 35:8.

In their own wickedness. While they are actually committing sinful acts (see Ps. 5:10).

Our God. The poet extends the personal note (v. 22) to include the congregation, the people, assembled for corporate worship.

Cut them off. The emphatic repetition lends summary force to the conclusion of the psalm (see v. 1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

14, 15, 21 PP 456
22 PP 413
23 PP 456

PSALM 95

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 95 to 100 constitute a group of psalms, in the nature of a "festal anthem," intended for thanksgiving in public worship. As such, the group exhibits a sort of pendulum structure, the content swinging between praise to Jehovah and reasons for that praise. The first psalm of the group, Ps. 95, sometimes called The Invitatory Psalm, because of its traditional use in the Christian church as a fervent invitation to praise, has two distinct parts: an invitation to worship (vs. 1–7a) and a warning against unbelief and disobedience (vs. 7b–11).

On the authorship of the psalm see Heb. 4:7.

1. Sing. Heb. *ranan*, "tell with joy."

Make a joyful noise. Compare Ps. 98:4; 100:1.

Rock. See Deut. 32:15; Ps. 89:26; 94:22; see on Ps. 18:2.

2. With thanksgiving. Our first duty and privilege in public and in private worship is to express our gratitude.

3. The Lord. Heb. *Yahweh* (See Vol. I, pp. 171, 172) Verses 3–7 state three reasons for our worshiping with glad and thankful hearts: God is the Supreme King, God is Creator, God is Shepherd of His people.

A great God. See Ps. 77:13; 145:3.

Above all gods. That is, above all other, so-called gods (see Ex. 12:12; Deut. 10:17; cf. Ps. 82:1, 6; 96:5; 97:7; Mal. 1:14).

4. Deep places. From the deepest depths of the earth to the highest heights, all things belong to God and are under His control.

Strength. Literally, "tops."

5. The sea. See Gen. 1:9, 10; Ps. 104:24, 25; DA 20. Contemplation of the creation should lead to worship of the Creator (see MH 413).

6. Worship. See GC 436, 437; 6T 351.

Kneel. The outward and visible change of position in worship often reflects the inner and spiritual nature of the exercise. As we show respect to men by rising up before them, so we should show respect to God by assuming appropriate postures in worship. Kneeling in reverence and bowing are fitting ways to indicate such respect (see 2 Chron. 6:13; 7:3; Isa. 45:23; Luke 22:41; Acts 7:60; Phil. 2:10; Ed 243; PK).

Our maker. The God who created us, redeemed us, established His covenant with us (see Deut. 32:6, 15; Ps. 100:3; 149:2).

7. Our God. Not only "a great God" (see v. 3), but "*our* God," brought into close covenant relationship with His people.

People of his pasture. Ps. 23:1–3; 74:1; 79:13.

To day. The phrase suggest that it is high time for a momentous decision. God's commands and invitations should be obeyed and accepted at once. As often as the Christian repeats this psalm, he should realize anew the force of the emphatic "to day". As often as he proves faithless to God, he should hear anew the gracious "to day," promising him forgiveness and restoration.

If ye will hear. Better as an expression of a wish, "O that ye would hear." The clause belongs to what follows rather than to the matter of the verse (see Heb. 3:7–11). In addition to thanksgiving the psalm provides exhortation and instruction for the people.

8. Provocation. Heb. *meribah*, "contention" (see Ex. 17:1–7).

Temptation. Heb. *massah* (see Ex. 17:1–7; Deut. 6:16).

9. My work. Here, God's providential acts (see Ps. 90:16; 92:5). In spite of God's miraculous display of power in Egypt and at the Red Sea, Israel failed to learn to trust their Deliverer.

10. Forty years. See Num. 14:33; Deut. 2:7; 8:2; 29:5.

Was I grieved. Heb. *qut*, "feel a loathing against." Compare the use of *qut* in Job 10:1; Eze. 6:9; 20:43; 36:31.

This generation. Literally, "a generation" (the word "this" is supplied); the generation that came out of Egypt.

11. I sware. See on Num. 14:21–23; cf. Deut. 1:34, 35.

My rest. That is, rest in Canaan (Deut. 12:9; cf. GC 458; see on Heb. 4:5–11).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 CG 520
1–118T 121
1 ML 29
1–68T 13
1–76T 351
3 PK 48
3–6Ed 243
4–6MH 413
5 DA 20
6 GC 437; ML 29; PK 48
7, 8 5T 216

PSALM 96

INTRODUCTION.—In Ps. 96 the psalmist calls on all the nations of the earth to acknowledge the universal sovereignty of Jehovah. It has been called A Missionary Hymn for All Ages. The psalm praises Jehovah as Creator and Wonder-Worker of old (vs. 1–6), as Ruler of the world at present (vs. 7–9), and as redeeming Judge at the restitution of all things (vs. 10–13). It is marked by frequent repetition of key phrases (see vs. 1, 2, 7, 8, 13).

The 13 verses of Ps. 96 are largely identical with vs. 23–33 of the psalm recorded in 1 Chron. 16:8–36, which David composed for the ceremony of enshrining the ark in Jerusalem. Variations from the original form of the psalm are probably due to adaption for liturgical use.

1. Sing unto the Lord. Compare Ps. 33:3; 98:1; Isa. 42:10. The expression is repeated three times in vs. 1, 2; such iteration is characteristic of this psalm (see vs. 7, 8, 13).

All the earth. The psalmist calls not only on his fellow Hebrews but on all the nations of the earth to celebrate God's praise.

2. Name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17; cf. Ps. 100:4; 145:1, 10, 11.

Shew forth. Or, "announce," "inform" (see Isa. 52:7).

3. Among the heathen. Not only among the Israelites, but among all the nations of the earth.

Among all people. Literally, "among all the peoples" of the earth (see v. 7; PK 313).

4. Great. God's greatness calls for great praise (see Ps. 95:3).

Above all gods. Compare Isa. 40; 41; 44.

5. Idols. Heb. *'elilim*, "nothings." There is apparently a play on words between *'elohim*, the gods of the nations, and *'elilim*, "things of nought" (see 1 Cor. 8:4).

Made the heavens. Because God alone created, He alone is to be praised (see Gen. 1:1; Ps. 95:5; 115:15; Isa. 42:5; 44:24; Jer. 10:11; GC 436, 437).

6. Strength and beauty. Compare 1 Chron. 16:27 where the word "gladness" appears in place of the word "beauty," and the word "place" instead of the word "sanctuary."

7. Give. Note the threefold repetition of the word in vs. 7, 8 (cf. the similar repetition of "sing" in vs. 1, 2). We should go into God's house to give rather than merely to get. Real prayer does more than lodge requests—it ascribes

8. Name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17.

Offering. Heb. *minchah*, a cereal,or "meat," offering (see on Lev. 2:1; Ps. 40:6).

9. Beauty of holiness. See on 1 Chron. 16:29; Ps. 29:2.

Fear. Ps. 97:4; on 1 Chron. 16:30.

10. The Lord reigneth. Ps. 93:1; 97:1; see on 1 Chron. 16:31.

Righteously. Ps. 67:4; cf. Ps. 9:8; 96:13.

11. Rejoice. All nature is invited to share in the praise of God when Christ comes to usher in the eternal reign of righteousness (see GC 300; Ps. 148:7–10; cf. Ps. 98:7–9). In this psalm vs. 11–13 present a galaxy of poetic personifications.

13. He cometh. A vivid picture of the coming of Christ to inaugurate His kingdom of righteousness. The repetition of the phrase lends force and animation to the passage.

To judge. Christ's coming to judgment will result in the establishment of moral order in the earth and the inauguration of eternal peace and happiness (see John 5:22; Acts 17:31).

With righteousness. See Ps. 72:2–4; Isa. 11:1–9.

People. Literally, "peoples." Because Messiah's kingship is the basis of security in the eternal kingdom, all men are called to rejoice in His redemptive judgment.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–13 8T 122

3 ML 288; PK 313

5 GC 437

6 PP 34

9 6T 363

11, 13 GC 300

PSALM 97

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 97 celebrates the enthronement of Jehovah as righteous Ruler over the whole earth, and shows that the idols are but nothing and that the righteous are vindicated. Next to the theophany (or manifestation of God's glory) of Hab. 3, Ps. 97 presents one of the most splendid pictures of divine glory to be found in the OT (see Ex. 19; Ps. 18). "The Lord reigneth" is the theme of this liturgical psalm.

1. The Lord reigneth. See Ps. 93:1; 96:10; 99:1. The Christian should often make this glorious affirmation.

Earth rejoice. See Ps. 96:1.

Multitude of isles. Literally, "many isles"; the word translated "isles" may mean both "isles" and "coastlands." Here evidently the islands and coastlands of the Mediterranean Sea are primarily referred to (see Ps. 72:10; cf. Isa. 60:9).

2. Clouds and darkness. Descriptive of how the majesty of God reveals itself to the eyes of mortal man. There are mysteries concerning the Deity man cannot fathom (see Rom. 11:33; Ed 169; SC 111; PP 43).

Righteousness and judgment. See Ps. 89:14. It matters not how great the evil may be, righteousness will ultimately prevail.

"Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies among his worshippers."
—WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT, "The Battle Field"

3. A fire. See Ps. 18:13; 50:3.

4. His lightnings. See Ps. 77:16–18 cf. 104:32; Hab. 3:6–10.

The earth. Compare Judges 5:4; Ps. 68:8; 114:7.

5. The hills melted. Compare Judges 5:5; Micah 1:4; Nahum 1:5; 2 Peter 3:10; Rev. 20:11. The divine manifestation at Sinai seems to be in the poet's mind.

Presence of the Lord. The repetition lends emphasis to the all-inclusive title of Deity (see Joshua 3:11, 13; Micah 4:13; cf. Zech. 4:14; 6:5).

6. The heavens declare. See on Ps. 19:1; 50:6.

People. Literally, "peoples" (see v. 1; cf. Isa. 40:5).

7. Confounded. A description of the impression made upon the heathen when the glory of God appears. The idols are impotent before God.

All ye gods. See on Ps. 82:1, 6. If the gods of the heathen are referred to, it is only in figure, for these gods actually do not exist. The LXX reads: "Worship Him, all ye His angels" (see on Ps. 8:5). The Vulgate has: "Adore Him, all ye angels."

8. Zion. See Ps. 2:6; 9:14; 68:16; see on Ps. 48:2. Ps. 97:8 describes the impression made upon Israel when the glory of God appears. Zion rejoiced when she heard the glad things that the Lord reigned.

Daughters of Judah. See on Ps. 48:11.

Because of thy judgments. They rejoice, not vindictively, but because truth has triumphed.

9. High. Heb. *'Elyon* (see Vol. I, p. 173; Ps. 83:18).

Above all gods. See on Ps. 95:3.

10. Hate evil. The psalmist concludes with an exhortation to hate evil (see Ps. 45:7; CT 397; cf. Ps. 34:14–22; 2 Cor. 6:14–18). Evil separates us from God. Indifference to evil opens the way for Satan to enter the life. Where there is love of sin in the heart, there can be no real religion (see Prov. 8:13).

Souls. See on Ps. 16:10.

Saints. Heb. *chasidim* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

Delivereth them. Compare Dan. 3:16–30; 6:16–23.

11. Is sown. From the Heb. *zara'*, "to sow [as of seed in the field]". The word is used figuratively with reference to moral subjects, as to sow "righteousness" (Prov. 11:18), "iniquity" (Prov. 22:8), "wickedness" (Job 4:8)—things which, when sown, may produce a corresponding harvest. "Light" may here be conceived of as a seed sown, ready to spring forth and bear fruit for the honest seeker after truth. "Every truly honest soul will come to the light of truth. 'Light is sown for the righteous.' And no church can advance in holiness unless its members are earnestly seeking for truth as for hid treasure" (GC 522).

Instead of *zara'* one Hebrew manuscript has *zarach*, "to shine forth." This reading is supported by the LXX, the Syriac, and the Targums. *Zarach* is used in Ps. 112:4 in the statement, "Unto the upright there ariseth light."

12. Rejoice. Ps. 32:11; 33:1.

Give thanks. Ps. 30:4. Man's highest joy should be in the knowledge that there is a God, and that He is the Father of His earthly children.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 COL 177; Ed 169; PP 43; SC 111; 5T 197, 699

10–12CT 397

11 CW 34; GC 522

PSALM 98

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 98 is a superb call to all peoples and to all the forces of nature to praise God, the Sovereign-Judge of the universe (see Introduction to Ps. 93, 95). The psalm has been called an echo of Ps. 96, although it exhibits a more definite pattern of form than that psalm. Three stanzas of similar length, each presenting a unified idea, are clearly discernible: reason for praise (vs. 1–3), manner of praising (vs. 4–6), invitation to praise (vs. 7–9). The psalm has great freshness and spontaneity of spirit.

On the superscription see p. 627.

1. A new song. Ps. 33:3; 96:1. Verses 1–3 state the reasons for praising Jehovah. The psalm begins on a sublime note of praise.

Marvellous things. General blessings and particular benefits (see Ex. 15:11, 21; Ps. 77:14).

Right hand. Ps. 44:3; cf. Ex. 15:6; Isa. 52:10; 59:16; 63:5.

2. Hath made known. By acts of deliverance (see Isa. 52:10).

Openly. Literally, "before the eyes."

Heathen. Or, "nations" (see on Ps. 2:1). God's acts were so public that all the nations around Israel could see His power (see Ps. 97:6).

3. His mercy and his truth. See Ps. 25:10; 26:3.

Ends of the earth. See Isa. 52:10; cf. Ps. 98:2; Luke 2:10; 3:6; Rom. 10:12, 18.

4. Joyful noise. See Ps. 66:1; Ps. 95:1; 100:1. Verses 4–6 state the manner of praising Jehovah.

All the earth. The psalm is distinguished by its universal appeal to all peoples.

Sing praise. Heb. *zamar*, "make melody," either with voice or instrument, or both. Spiritually endowed creatures should consciously show forth the praise of God—men have voices with which to sound His praise and are gifted with the ability to make instruments with which to praise Him.

5. Harp. On the musical instruments mentioned in vs. 5, 6 see pp. 30, 34, 39.

6. A joyful noise. There are no "muted violins" here; "all the stops of the organ are pulled out in full diapason."

7. Sea roar. See Ps. 96:11. Verses 7–9 extend an invitation to all nature to join in the praise of Jehovah.

8. Floods clap. A personification perhaps suggested by the breaking waves on the shore.

Hills be joyful. Compare Ps. 65:9–13 for an exquisite picture of nature in all her beauty praising God.

9. He cometh. See on Ps. 96:13. The redeemed and all the works of nature look forward with unspeakable anticipation to the time of the redemptive judgment.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

9 CH 303

PSALM 99

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 99 celebrates the kingship of Jehovah, calling on all men to confess His greatness and worship Him who alone is holy. The psalm repeats the message of Ps. 93, 97 in varied form—all three begin with the phrase, "The Lord reigneth"—and like Ps. 93, puts special emphasis on holiness as God's chief attribute and requirement (see Ps. 93:5; Ps. 99:3, 5, 9). The intricately beautiful structure of Ps. 99 reveals two greater refrains (in slightly varied form, at the end of the first and third

stanzas: vs. 5, 9), and three lesser refrains (vs. 3, 5, 9), augmented to "the Lord our God is holy" in its third occurrence.

1. The Lord reigneth. See Ps. 93:1; 96:10; 97:1.

The people. Literally, "the peoples."

Tremble. When Jehovah manifests His kingship, men tremble before Him (see Isa. 64:2).

Between the cherubims. See Ps. 80:1; 5T 754.

Be moved. Compare Ps. 77:18; 114:7.

2. Great in Zion. See on Ps. 48:1, 2; cf. Ps. 95:3.

The people. Literally, "the peoples," that is, the nations. The God who has His capital in Zion rules all nations.

3. Terrible name. See Ps. 111:9; see on Ps. 5:11; 7:17; cf. Deut. 28:58.

It. Heb. *hu'*, which may refer either to "name," representing Jehovah's essential character, or, to "Lord," in which case it should be translated "he." The translation "He is holy" is more consistent with the repetition of the refrain in vs. 5, 9. There is no essential difference in the two translations. Holiness is one of God's supreme attributes. Holiness is also demanded of God's children (see Lev. 19:2). This is the first appearance of the lesser refrain (see Introduction to Ps. 99; also vs. 5, 9).

4. The king's strength. The first clause of v. 4 should probably be connected with the preceding thought and the passage rendered, "He is holy and strong, a King loving justice." The king is evidently Jehovah (see v. 1). The essential strength of God's character is in favor of justice (see Isa. 61:8).

Thou. Emphatic in the Hebrew, probably to show the contrast between the great King and earthly kings.

5. Exalt. See Ps. 30:1; Ps. 34:3. The verse constitutes the first appearance of the greater refrain (see Introduction to Ps. 99; also v. 9).

For he is holy. The second occurrence of the lesser refrain (see on v. 3). The clause may be translated, "for it is holy," in which case "it" would refer to God's footstool. In Ugaritic religious literature (see p. 618) the footstool of deity is an important part of the divine furnishings.

6. Moses and Aaron. With startling poetic abruptness, this verse presents examples of representative holy men who worshiped God, interceded for their fellows, and received answers to their prayers. The implication is that all—priests and people—should worship Jehovah. God calls for great interceders today.

Though not generally regarded as a priest, Moses is here numbered among the priests perhaps because of his position of spiritual leadership and because of his work in connection with the sanctuary (see Ex. 24:6–8; 32:30–32; 40:18–33; Lev. 8:6–30).

Samuel. Samuel is particularly mentioned, along with Moses, as having power with God in prayer (see Jer. 15:1; cf. 1 Sam. 7:8, 9; 1 Sam. 12:19–23).

Name. See on Ps. 7:17.

7. Cloudy pillar. See Ex. 33:9; Num. 12:5.

They kept. They obeyed God's laws, and He answered their prayers. Obedience to the divine will is the condition of answered prayer.

8. That forgavest. Both Moses and Aaron sinned, but God in His mercy forgave (see Ex. 32:1–24; Num. 20:12, 13; cf. Ps. 106:32). "Them" probably refers to the people generally.

Tookest vengeance. God's chastisement extended even to holy men mentioned in v. 6. Moses and Aaron were excluded from Canaan for their sin at Meribah (see Num. 20:12).

Inventions. Literally, "deeds"; the context suggests self-willed activities. Compare Eccl. 7:29.

9. Exalt the Lord. Verse 9 is the second appearance of the greater refrain, in slightly modified form (see on v. 5).

His holy hill. Zion, the seat of national worship (see on Ps. 48:2).

Lord our God is holy. The third occurrence of the lesser refrain, augmented (see on vs. 3, 5).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 PK 176
1–3MH 438; 8T 285
1–5PK 29
9 MH 415; 8T 264

PSALM 100

INTRODUCTION.—Among the psalms of triumphant thanksgiving, Ps. 100 stands pre-eminent. It is a glorious climax to the succession of psalms beginning with Ps. 95. In this psalm all peoples of the earth are invited to join Israel in a universal ascription of praise to Jehovah, for His loving-kindness and faithfulness are everlasting. Ps. 100 is probably the origin of Old Hundredth, our Doxology, beginning, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow." The tune was composed by Louis Bourgeois in 1551. In 1561 William Kethe composed the paraphrase beginning, "All people that on earth do dwell" for the Bourgeois tune. Perhaps no psalm is used more frequently today in synagogue or church. It teaches the universal shepherdhood of God. There is in it not a single mournful note.

On the superscription see pp. 627, 628.

1. A joyful noise. See Ps. 66:1; 98:4.

All ye lands. Literally, "all the earth."

2. Gladness. This is the keynote of the psalm.

3. Hath made us. God's claim to our praise rests first upon the fact that He has made us His people (see Ps. 95:6; cf. Deut. 32:6, 15).

Not we ourselves. A number of Hebrew manuscripts, the Targums, and the margin of the Hebrew Bible read, "we are his." On the other hand the LXX and the Syriac support the reading of the KJV.

Sheep. Compare Ps. 95:7; see on Ps. 23:1–4. Thinking these sublime thoughts leads the psalmist to give thanks.

4. Gates … courts. Probably referring to the sanctuary, but by extension to all places where God is worshiped.

Thanksgiving. Probably the sacrifices of thanksgiving (see Ps. 96:8). The picture is that of grateful worshipers bringing their offerings of thanksgiving to the sanctuary.

Praise. "The melody of praise is the atmosphere of heaven; and when heaven comes in touch with the earth, there is music and song,—'thanksgiving, and the voice of melody'" (Ed 161; cf. Isa. 51:3).

Name. See on Ps. 7:17.

5. Good. See 1 Chron. 16:34; 2 Chron. 5:13; 7:3; Ps. 106:1; 107:1; 118:1; etc.

His mercy is everlasting. In the Hebrew, the same as the recurrent refrain translated "his mercy endureth for ever" (Ps. 136; see also Ps. 118:1–4, 29).

To all generations. Literally, "to generation and generation." A picture of one generation following another, all enjoying God's kindness and faithfulness. God deserves our praise because He makes us what we are, redeems us, loves us, purposes all good for us now, and provides for our happiness hereafter.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–4MH 415; 8T 264
2 PP 594
2–4DA 288
3 GC 437; 6T 351
3, 4 Ed 243
4 AH 474; ML 171; 5T 317, 491
4, 5 3T 240

PSALM 101

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 101 presents a condensed tabulation of the principles that should guide a ruler in his state. It is of special value to parents in "guarding the influences of the home" (CT 119). Verses 1–4 concern the ruler's private life; vs. 5–8, his public activities.

The psalm was composed by David (CT 119), possibly during the early part of his reign. It is a beautiful expression of the nobility of soul of King David.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Mercy. Heb. *chesed* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

2. Behave myself wisely. A kingly resolution, worthy of a kingly soul.

When? The question is the sudden outburst of the devout soul, longing for the fulfillment of his resolution, which is possible only when God comes fully into his life. David had a strong desire for fellowship with God.

Within my house. Godliness begins at home.

3. Wicked thing. Literally, "thing of Belial" (see on Deut. 13:13).

Before mine eyes. David resolves not to look upon evil (see 1 John 2:16; cf. 2 Cor. 3:18), that his life may not imitate what he would see. To a great extent we are what we habitually behold. "Hear no evil; see no evil; speak no evil." Concerning Job's high estimate of personal purity see Job 31:1, 7.

Not cleave. Though I come into contact with evil, I shall immediately separate myself from it. "We cannot keep the birds from flying over our heads, but we can keep them from building nests in our hair."

4. Froward. Heb. *'iqqesh*, "crooked," "perverted" (see Prov. 11:20). At this point the psalmist turns from resolutions of a private nature to resolutions that concern his public life as ruler.

5. Privily. Privately, secretly.

Not I suffer. As king, David resolves not to tolerate in his official household those who are characterized as above.

6. Mine eyes. David resolves to keep on the watch for faithful men who will make worthy members of his court.

In a perfect way. See v. 2. David desires his official associates to be like him. They will be chosen for inherent worth, not for high birth or talent. What David requires in himself, he requires in others.

7. He that worketh deceit. Compare Rev. 14:1, 5; see on Prov. 12:17; 20:17.

8. Early destroy. No evil will be allowed to persist. At its first appearance, it will be destroyed.

City of the Lord. Jerusalem, David's capital. If a nation's capital is morally clean, the example thus set will probably be followed in the nation.

Surely the high resolutions of this psalm, if kept, would make a king worthy of David's praise as expressed in 2 Sam. 23:3, 4.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 AH 404, 406, 409; ML 86, 88

3–7CT 119

PSALM 102

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 102 is one of the saddest of the seven penitential psalms. It appears to be the prayer of the exile composed in the land of his captivity. In elegiac strains it tells of pain and sorrow, of persecution and faintheartedness. But it does more than that; it recognizes hope in return from captivity and restoration of spirit. The poem swings between the two ideas, but closes on a sublime note of confidence in God's eternal constancy in His dealings with the children of men. The psalm falls into four parts: introduction (vs. 1, 2), complaint (vs. 3–11), consolation (vs. 12–22), conclusion (vs. 23–28). In it the latter-day Christian may find expression for his trials and the assurance of heavenly consolation in times of unusual distress.

The superscription, "A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord," is unique among the superscriptions to the psalms. It characterizes the psalm and designates the purpose for which it was composed (see pp. 624, 628).

1. Hear. See Ps. 18:6; 39:12.

2. Hide not. See Ps. 4:6; 13:1.

Speedily. See Ps. 69:17. The depth of the psalmist's dejection and the intensity of his appeal are emphasized by the cumulative pleas for divine aid in vs. 1, 2.

3. For. Verse 3 marks the beginning of the psalmist's complaint.

4. Forget to eat. See Job 33:20; Ps. 107:18.

5. My bones cleave. See Job 19:20; Lam. 4:8.

6. Pelican. Heb. *qa'ath*, translated "cormorant" in Isa. 34:11; Zeph. 2:14. The exact species of bird referred to is not known, although it has been observed that the pelican is an appropriate symbol of utter loneliness and melancholy.

7. I watch. Or, "I am wakeful."

Sparrow. Heb. *sippor*, a general term for winged animals (see Gen. 7:14; Deut. 4:17). "Alone" is perhaps an allusion to a bird bereft of its mate.

9. Ashes. See Joshua 7:6; Job 2:7, 8; Lam. 3:16. For Ugaritic parallels see on Ps. 42:3.

11. Shadow that declineth. A striking figure of the approach of death (see Job 14:2). Samuel Butler said, "My years slip through me as water through a sieve."

12. But thou. Abruptly, the psalmist finds consolation in the contemplation of the eternal sovereignty of God, and rises above his complaint. Because God does not change, His promises are sure, despite His apparent disregard for the psalmist's suffering for the time being.

Shalt endure. See Ps. 9:7; Lam. 5:19.

Remembrance. See Ex. 3:15; Ps. 135:13.

14. Stones. The exiles even enjoy contemplating the piled-up stones and dust of what was once their glorious city Jerusalem, so deeply in love with Zion are they (see Neh. 4:2, 10; Ps. 79:1). There is a pathetic touch of nostalgia in the concept of this verse. Even the ruins of our childhood home are dear to us.

15. Shall fear. According to God's plan, restored Zion would compose a people fulfilling the divine destiny in the choice of Israel. Missionary activities would convert many of the heathen and the prosperity of the new state would attract many nations. Unfortunately Israel failed. Had they been faithful the whole earth would have been prepared for the first advent of Christ (PK 703, 704; see also Vol. IV, pp. 26–30).

16. He shall appear. The Messiah would have come to the restored state (see on v. 15; also see article, "The Role of Israel in Old Testament Prophecy," Vol. IV).

18. Written. This seems to be the only mention in the psalms where the record of God's providences is said to be written.

Lord. Heb. *Yah* (see on Ps. 68:4).

19. From heaven. See on Deut. 26:15; also see Ps. 14:2.

20. Those that are appointed to death. Literally, "children of death" (see Ps. 79:11).

21. Name. See on Ps. 5:11; 7:17.

23. My strength. From the consolation of God's eternal sovereignty the psalmist falls back again for an instant on his own weakness and the shortness of his life—but it is only for an instant. Almost immediately he is swallowed up again in the contemplation of the unchangeableness of God.

24. In the midst. The psalmist's prayer is evidently prompted in part by his desire to see the restoration of Jerusalem. He cannot bear the thought of dying before seeing the fulfillment of his hopes. In the face of God's eternal existence he feels how fleeting and transient are his own days (see vs. 11, 12; Ps. 90:2; Hab. 1:12).

25. Hast thou laid. See Gen. 1:1. Verses 25–27 are quoted in Heb. 1:10–12 as an address to Christ. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews is proving that Christ, as the Son of God, also has a place of pre-eminence above the angels. Here is proof also of the position of Christ as Creator.

26. Garment. Ugaritic literature (see p. 618) also compares the heavens to a garment that "will wear away."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

15, 18–22PK 370

19 MH 438; 8T 285

PSALM 103

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 103 has been described as one of the most exuberant of the psalms. It is the spontaneous expression of a heart full of praise to God for His grace and compassion. In it David praises God for blessings in his own life (vs. 1–5), tells of the loving-kindness God exercises toward His children generally (vs. 6–14), shows man's dependence upon the mercy God (vs. 15–18), and invites the whole creation to worship

God (vs. 19–22). Ps. 103 and 104 are companion psalms, the first celebrating the wonders of God in His compassion and mercy, the second celebrating His wonders in creation.

On the authorship of the psalm see MB 167. On the superscription see p. 616.

1. Bless the Lord. See on Ps. 63:4.

Soul. See on Ps. 16:10.

All that is within me. Nothing less than the use of all our faculties is sufficient to praise the Lord.

Name. See Ps. 33:21; also see on Ps. 7:17. The inversion of the order in which the ideas are presented (the rhetorical figure of chiasmus) is a pleasing rhetorical variation in the synonymous parallelism.

2. Forget not. A warning frequently uttered by Moses (see Deut. 4:9, 23; etc.). "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history" (LS 196). "Lest we forget" is the refrain of Rudyard Kipling's Victorian jubilee poem, "Recessional."

3. Who forgiveth. See on Ps. 32:1.

4. Lovingkindness. Heb. *chesed*, "divine love" (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

5. Like the eagle's. The ancient story that after a certain time the eagle molted and renewed its youth is without scientific foundation. The bird molts inconspicuously. Perhaps the psalmist has in mind the fact that the eagle lives longer than many other birds and keeps its vigor. The forgiven sinner shows the freshness of renewed youth.

With this personal ascription of praise, David turns to the experience of God's children. Note the six blessings in vs.: 3–5: forgives, heals, redeems, crowns, satisfies, renews.

7. Unto Moses. See Ex. 33:13. God's ways are "past finding out" (Rom. 11:33). They must be "made known," sometimes by divine revelation, as at Sinai (Ex. 20).

8. Merciful and gracious. Compare Ex. 34:6; Ps. 86:15.

10. Rewarded us. In Christ the penalty for sin is mitigated.

11. Is high. God's love is as immeasurable as the infinite distance between heaven and earth.

12. Removed our transgressions. Compare Isa. 38:17; Micah 7:19. We cannot understand the vastness of the universe, but we can understand fatherhood (see v. 13).

13. Like as a father. See Deut. 32:6.

14. Knoweth our frame. Man's frailty and transitoriness are strong appeals to God's loving-kindness (see Gen. 8:21; Ps. 89:5; Ps. 139:1–18).

Dust. See Gen. 2:7; 3:19; Job 34:15.

15. Man. Heb. *'enosh* (see on Ps. 8:4).

As grass. Compare Isa. 40:6–8; Isa. 51:12.

19. Hath prepared. The reign of the King of the universe is not national, or even imperial, but universal. God is King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16), not merely king of the nation of Israel.

David began the psalm with his own experience, and then, poetically, included with himself all that fear the Lord, in partaking of God's goodness. Now he calls on all creation, animate and inanimate, to unite in blessing the Lord.

20. Excel in strength. The picture of the angels doing "his commandments" binds the family of heaven close to the family of God's commandment-keeping children on earth.

21. Hosts. See on Ps. 24:10; Luke 2:13.

Ministers. Parallel with "hosts" (see Ps. 104:4; Dan. 7:10; Heb. 1:14).

22. All his works. The psalmist calls upon the whole creation in heaven and on earth, animate and inanimate, to join in the chorus of thanksgiving (see Ps. 148).

Bless the Lord. After the universal paean of praise there is an infinite pathos in David's repetition of the phrase with which the psalm began. Conscious that the universe is now vocal with the praise of God he would also have his own voice heard.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 SR 129
1, 2 PP 294
1–4CT 243
1–14MH 79
2, 3 ML 154
2–4CH 502
3 DA 270; MH 77, 111, 243
3, 4 MH 113
8 4T 67
8–18 8T 272
12 MB 167
13 COL 204; CS 17; Ed 245; GW 210; MB 113; 4T 177; 5T 177, 315
13, 14 CH 375; MH 123, 225
14 COL 362; GW 244; MM 296; MYP 226; 8T 191
17, 18 PP 754
19 GC 511; PK 50
20 DA 779; GC 512, 517, 630; MM 94; PK 602; PP 100; Te 291; 1T 301, 346; 2T 171, 591; 3T 526, 450; 8T 17; 9T 17
20, 21 ML 305
21 GC 512

PSALM 104

INTRODUCTION.—As Ps. 103, its companion psalm, celebrates God's wonders in His compassion and tenderness, so Ps. 104 celebrates God's wonders in creation. Similar to Ps. 103 in exuberance, Ps. 104 is the song of the poet's spontaneous delight in the works of God's creation. In the language and manner of the poet, not of the scientist, the psalm discusses the works of creation, always discerning in creation her Creator. The psalm is remarkable for the movement and vividness of the images that crowd into the picture of creation. In this respect it is probably unsurpassed in literature. Someone has said that it would be worth studying Hebrew for ten years if as a result of that study the student could read this psalm in the original.

For a discussion of the higher critical view that the author of this psalm borrowed heavily from an Egyptian hymn, see Additional Note at the end of this psalm.

1. Bless. Like its companion, Ps. 103, this psalm begins with praise (see on Ps. 103:1).

Clothed. See Ps. 93:1; 8:5.

2. Coverest thyself. God is represented as wrapping Himself in a robe of light. Robert Grant's hymn "O Worship the King" has in its second stanza the phrase, "whose robe is the light, whose canopy space." Light both conceals and reveals (see John 1:4–9; 1 John 1:5).

Verses 2–4 may be compared with the work of the first two days of creation, when light and the firmament were created to replace darkness and chaos (see Gen. 1:3–8).

Like a curtain. See Isa. 40:22.

3. Layeth the beams. A poetic representation (see Ps. 18:11; Amos 9:6).

Chambers. Literally, "upper chambers."

Clouds. See Isa. 19:1. "His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form" (see hymn cited in v. 2).

Wings of the wind. See Ps. 18:10.

4. His angels spirits. See Heb. 1:7. The translation of some of the later versions, "who maketh winds his messengers," is grammatically and lexically possible.

5. Foundations. The psalmist poetically pictures the earth as resting on a firm foundation (see Job 38:4–6; cf. Job 26:7), probably to emphasize the stability of God's creation.

With vs. 5–9 compare the work of the first part of the third day of creation (see Gen. 1:9, 10).

6. Coveredst it. With the poetic account of vs. 6–8, compare the simple prose statement of Gen. 1:9, 10.

8. They go up. The passage is better rendered "mountains rise, valleys sink," a forceful picture of the work of God in separating the waters from the dry land and determining the contours of the earth.

9. Set a bound. See Job 26:8–10; Job 38:8–11.

10. Sendeth the springs. The subject is treated with exquisite poetic detail, with emphasis on the loving care of the Creator.

13. From his chambers. See v. 3; Ps. 147:8. God waters the earth by means of rain, as well as by the watercourses.

14. Herb. Heb. *'eśeb*. The word appears in Gen. 1:11, 12, 29, 30.

For the service of man. Or, "herbs for man's tillage" (see 1 Chron. 27:26; Neh. 10:37).

15. Wine. See on Deut. 14:26.

16. Are full of sap. Literally, "are sated," or, "are satisfied," here possibly with water.

18. Conies. Heb. *shephannim*, probably rock badgers (see on Prov. 30:26).

19. Moon. The picture of the night precedes that of the day. With vs. 19–23 compare the Creation record concerning the heavenly bodies (Gen. 1:14–19).

Seasons. See Gen. 1:14. On the Hebrew lunar calendar see Vol. II, pp. 112–117.

20. Makest darkness. A vivid picture of night in the forest, the wild creatures stealthily creeping forth to find their prey, with the lion, king of beasts, as the climax (see Ps. 17:12; 58:6).

22. Lay them down. At sunrise the wild creatures seek cover from detection.

23. Until the evening. The day is appointed for man's labor.

24. How manifold. As if no longer able to restrain his praise in the contemplation of God's creation, the psalmist pauses to utter a cry of wonder at the wisdom of the Creator.

25. Sea. The poet resumes the story of the creation, mentioning the creatures of the sea (see Gen. 1:20–22).

Innumerable. From the tiniest denizen of the depths to the leviathan of v. 26.

26. Ships. A quaintly human touch. The psalmist brings into the picture a single instance of the "creation" of man's skill.

Leviathan. See on Job 41:1.

27. These wait. See Ps. 145:15.

29. Their breath. Compare Ps. 146:4.

To their dust. See Gen. 3:19.

30. Spirit. Heb. *ruach* (see on Ps. 31:5).

33. I will sing. As the psalmist wishes God to rejoice in His creation, he too will sing his Creator's praise as long as he lives. Here is a cycle of universal joy (see DA 21).

34. My meditation. See Ps. 19:14.

35. Praise ye the Lord. Heb. *halelu–Yah*. This is the first appearance of the expression in the psalms. The term has become a part of the language of prayer and praise (see Ps. 105:45; Ps. 106:1, 48; etc.).

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON PSALM 104

A 14th-century Pharaoh, Ikhnaton, was known as the heretic king because he renounced Egypt's many gods and introduced a short-lived form of monotheism by proclaiming Aten the only god of the land (see Vol. II, pp. 19, 20). At this time a hymn honoring the sun disk Aten as the supreme and only god of creation was composed, perhaps by the king himself. Since this hymn contains certain thoughts and expressions that are also found in Ps. 104, many Biblical scholars have claimed that the author of Ps. 104 borrowed his material from the Egyptian Aten hymn, and applied it in a modified form to his God.

It is admitted that some parallels in thought and expression exist between the Aten hymn and Ps. 104, and that the Aten hymn, or parts of it, may have been known beyond Egypt's borders during the time of Ikhnaton. However, there is no reason for any student of the Bible to surrender his conviction that Ps. 104 is an original production, and for the following reasons: (1) The parallels are not numerous. Of the 149 lines of the Hymn to Aten in J. H. Breasted's translation (*Dawn of Conscience* [1933], pp. 281–286), only 17 show some parallels to the 104th psalm, leaving 132 lines without parallels. (2) The parallels are not so striking as the advocates of the dependency of Ps. 104 on the Aten hymn claim. (3) The Aten religion was considered a heresy in Egypt after the collapse of Ikhnaton's movement about 1350 B.C., and the Aten hymn, which was not used after that time, must in all probability soon have been completely forgotten. This fact makes it very unlikely that a Hebrew author would have known it in Palestine many centuries later. (4) Every poet who praises his god as the creator is almost certain to employ illustrations, expressions, imagery, and language similar to those used in Ps. 104 or the Aten hymn. Hence, Ps. 104 and the Aten hymn are both probably original.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–3 4T 273–275
5 PP 44
5–12 PK 134
10, 12 Ed 118
13, 14 CS 17; FE 414
14 CSW 140
14, 15 PK 135
18 CG 59; Ed 118
20, 21 PP 115

24 Ed 99, 104; MH 412
24–28PK 135
27 3T 228
27, 28 PP 115
27–30Ed 131
33, 34 MH 101

PSALM 105

20

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 105 is a national hymn of Israel (see Ps. 78; Ps. 106). It illustrates God's dealings with Israel from the times of Abraham and his descendants down to the conquest of Canaan, with emphasis on the covenant relationship between God and Israel. In the hymn Joseph is presented as the connecting link between Egypt and Canaan. The antique meter of the hymn marches on in a succession of joyous couplets, majestic in their simple parallelism.

Verses 1–15 of this psalm are practically identical with vs. 8–22 of the psalm recorded in 1 Chron. 16:8–36, which David composed for the ceremony of enshrining the ark in Jerusalem. Variations from the original form of the psalm are probably accounted for by adaptation for liturgical use at a later date.

Ps. 105, 106 are companion psalms. Ps. 105 should be studied in the light of the counsel given in 8T 107–116; TM 98; and LS 196.

1. Give thanks. The love of God as shown in Israel's history demands full acknowledgment. This is the theme of the psalm.

His name. See on Ps. 7:17.

People. Literally, "peoples." All nations are to know God's "deeds," His "holy name" (v. 3), His "marvellous works" (v. 5), His "judgments" (v. 5). The psalm opens with a missionary ring.

4. His strength. Only by God's strength was Israel saved; only thus may we be saved.

5. Remember. Compare Deut. 32:7.

Wonders. Here chiefly the miracles in Egypt, as constituting much of the content of the psalm (see Ex. 6:6; 7:4).

6. Seed of Abraham. See v. 42.

Chosen. Literally, "chosen ones" (see v. 43).

7. Our God. Verses 7–11 extol God as the one who remembers His covenant.

8. A thousand generations. Poetic hyperbole for a long period of time (see Deut. 7:9).

9. With Abraham. See Gen. 12:7; 13:14–17; 15:18–21; 17:2; 22:15–18; etc.

Unto Isaac. See Gen. 26:3; cf. 28:13.

13. To another. Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees (see Gen. 11:31 to 12:5). The patriarchs were forced to migrate from Canaan (see Gen. 12:10; 26:1; 28:10).

14. Reproved kings. See Gen. 12:17; 20:3.

15. Touch not. See Gen. 26:11.

Anointed. Probably in the sense of being chosen for a special mission.

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[20]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 89:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Prophets. See Gen. 20:7.

16. Called for a famine. See Gen. 41:53–57.

17. Before them. See Gen. 45:5.

Sold. See Gen. 37:28, 36.

19. His word came. That is until the prediction of Joseph's dreams of pre-eminence over his brothers came to pass (see Gen. 37:5–11).

Tried. The interval between the prediction and its fulfillment was a period of test for Joseph.

20. The king sent. See Gen. 41:14, 40, 41, 44, 46–49, 45:8.

22. Bind. The LXX, Syriac, and Jerome read *yasar*, "to instruct," instead of the Heb. *'asar*, "to bind." The difference consists in only one letter. Such a reading would make the first part of the verse parallel with the second. The idea might be illustrated from an Egyptian custom, according to which it was the duty of the prime minister, or vizier, to supervise the education of the royal children.

Pleasure. Heb. *nephesh* (see on Ps. 16:10). The translation "pleasure" is in harmony with Ugaritic usage (see p. 618).

Senators. Literally, "elders."

23. The land of Ham. Egypt, as the parallelism shows (see Ps. 78:51; see on Gen. 10:6).

24. Increased his people. Compare Ex. 1:9–16.

25. Turned their heart. In Bible figure, God is frequently described as doing that which He does not prevent (see on 2 Sam. 12:11; 16:22; 24:1; 1 Kings 12:15).

Subtilly. See Ex. 1:10.

26. Moses his servant. See Ex. 14:31; Deut. 34:5; Joshua 1:2.

Aaron. See Ex. 4:14–17, 27.

27 Among them. That is, the Egyptians.

Ham. See on v. 23.

28. Darkness. The 9th plague (see Ex. 10:21–23). The psalmist does not follow the sequence of the Exodus account of the plagues.

29. Blood. See Ex. 7:14–25.

30. Frogs. See Ex. 8:1–15.

31. Flies. See Ex. 8:20–24.

Lice. See Ex. 8:16–19.

32. Hail. See Ex. 9:18–35.

Flaming fire. See Ex. 9:23, 24.

34. Locusts. Heb. *'arbeh* (see Ex. 10:1–20).

Caterpillers. Heb. *yeleq*, thought to represent the unwinged stage of the locust. In the Exodus account only one word (*'arbeh*) is used.

36. Firstborn. See Ex 11, 12.

37. Silver and gold. See Ex. 12:35, 36. Before leaving Egypt the children of Israel claimed a recompense for their unpaid labor (see PP 281).

Not one feeble person. Literally, "no stumbler."

38. Glad. See Ex. 12:33.

39. Cloud. To lead the way and protect from the burning sun (see Ex. 13:21; PP 282). Verses 39–41 present three of the principal miracles in the wilderness: the protection and guidance of the cloud and fire, the quails and manna, the waters gushing from the rock. The crossing of the Red Sea is not mentioned.

40. Quails. See Ex. 16:13.

Bread of heaven. See on Ps. 78:24, 25.

41. Opened the rock. See Ex. 17:6; cf. Ps. 78:15, 20. Ps. 105:40, 41 emphasize the abundance of God's gifts.

43. Gladness. Heb. *rinnah*, "a ringing cry of joy" (see Ex. 15).

45. Keep his laws. In the preoccupations of the last days, we do well to remember God's blessings upon His people through all generations, and order our lives accordingly.

Praise ye the Lord. See on Ps. 104:35.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–458T 107–109; TM 98
1, 2 MH 101
2, 3 MH 255; PK 566
9 1T 203
14, 15 PP 131; 3T 94; 4T 229
15 PK 571
18 PP 218
21, 22 Ed 53; PP 222; 6T 219
23 MH 101
26, 27 PK 16
37 DA 824
39 PP 282
41 PP 411
42–45Ed 40
43–45PP 334
44, 45 PK 120

PSALM 106

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 106 is generally considered a sequel to Ps. 105. It is a national hymn of Israel, and like Ps. 105 reviews Israel's early history to show God's faithfulness to the covenant. However, it has this striking difference: the psalmist shows how chronic was Israel's disloyalty and what awful consequences she suffered as a result of her sins. The psalm covers the history of Israel from Egypt through the wilderness wandering, and her history in the Holy Land through the period of the judges. This hymn exhibits a swing of thought between the weakness and folly of Israel and the strength of God as shown both in deliverance and in punishment, in alternating unequal stanzas. It begins and closes with praise and prayer. The psalm is the first of the so-called hallelujah psalms (see also Ps. 111–113; 117; 135; 146–150). Like Ps. 105, Ps. 106 should be studied in the light of 8T 107–116; TM 98; and LS 196.

1. Mercy. Heb. *chesed*, "divine love" (see Additional Note on Ps. 36). God's steadfast love had prevented Israel from being utterly rejected. The complete clause "his mercy endureth for ever" is the recurrent refrain of Ps. 136. The words of Ps. 106:1 appear in David's psalm for the ceremony of enshrining the ark in Jerusalem (1 Chron. 16:34). In

the time of Christ this verse was sung as a part of the Temple festivities at the Feast of Tabernacles (see DA 448).

2. Praise. Heb. *tehillah*. *Tehillim* is the Hebrew title of the Psalter (see p. 615).

3. Blessed. See on Ps. 1:1.

4. Remember me. The general prayer of vs. 1–3 now turns to personal petition.

5. Nation. The words "chosen," "nation," and "inheritance" are synonymous.

6. We have sinned. Verses 6–39 review Israel's disloyalties from Egypt to Canaan, citing eight transgressions for which the nation makes confession.

7. Understood not. Their lack of careful consideration of God's judgments upon Egypt caused the fathers to forget His mercies (see Deut. 32:28, 29). Like the Israelites, we are prone to accept God's blessings as mere matter of fact, not allowing these tokens of beneficence to make any lasting impression on us.

Provoked him. The first of the eight acts of transgression (see on v. 6; see Ex. 14:11, 12).

8. For his name's sake. See on Ps. 31:3.

9. Rebuked. See Ex. 14:21, 22; cf. Ps. 104:7.

11. Covered their enemies. See Ex. 14:27–30; 15:5.

12. Believed they. See Ex. 14:31. The song of Moses (Ex. 15:1–21) is a magnificent poetic expansion of the deliverance at the Red Sea. But the Israelites soon forgot God's goodness.

13. Soon forgat. Verses 13–33 are the confession of Israel's sins in the wilderness: their lust for flesh, their revolt against Moses and Aaron, the sin of the golden calf, the incident of the spies, the sin at Baal-peor, and the murmuring at Meribah.

The successive sins recalled in the psalm follow without formal transition. This tendency to pass immediately from episode to episode without expressed connection is an example of the rhetorical figure called asyndeton. It is a characteristic of Ps. 106 (see vs. 6, 7, 13, 24, etc.). The effect of the asyndeton is to leave the impression of an almost breathless recollection upon recollection of the historic mistakes of the nation of Israel, as if the people were hastening to make a full confession.

Waited not. They ran ahead of God's plan for them. Whenever we fail to wait for God to reveal His plan for us, we fall into trouble.

14. Lusted exceedingly. See Num 11:4–6.

Tempted. Heb. *nasah*, "tested," "tried."

15. Their request. See Num. 11:31.

Leanness. Heb. *razon*, "emaciation" (see Num. 11:33, 34).

16. Envied Moses. The second sin in the wilderness: the revolt against Moses and Aaron (see Num. 16; 17).

Saint. Literally, "the holy one." The disaffected party protested that all the congregation were holy (see Num. 16:3).

17. Dathan. See Deut. 11:6. It is recorded that "the children of Korah died not" (see Num. 26:11).

18. The wicked. See Num. 16:2, 26, 35.

19. Horeb. Verses 19–23 describe the third sin in the wilderness: the sin of the golden calf (see Ex. 32; cf. Deut. 9:8–12).

20. Their glory. That is, the glory of God (Jer. 2:11; Rom. 1:23). The contrast between God's glory and a brute eating grass is a startling one. To what depths does carnal man descend!

21. They forgat. See on v. 13; see Deut. 6:12. Verses 21, 22 summarize the events in Egypt at the time of the Exodus.

Saviour. See Isa. 43:3.

22. Ham. See on Ps. 105:23.

23. In the breach. See Ex. 32:10–14, 32–34, cf. Eze. 22:30.

24. The pleasant land. See Deut. 8:7; Jer. 3:19; Eze. 20:6. Ps. 106:24–27 describes the fourth sin in the wilderness: the rebellion that occurred upon the return of the spies (see Num. 13; 14).

Believed not. See Deut. 1:22; cf. Heb. 3:18.

26. Lifted up his hand. God is pictured, in the language of men, as a man lifting his hand in taking an oath (see Ex. 6:8, where "did swear" is literally "lifted up my hand").

27. Scatter them. Compare Eze. 20:23.

28. Joined themselves. Verses 28–31 describe the fifth sin in the wilderness: the licentious carousing in connection with the worship of Baal-peor (see Num. 25).

Baal-peor. See Num. 23:28; 25:18; Num 31:16; Joshua 22:17. On Baal worship see on Judges 2:11; see also Vol. II, p. 40.

Sacrifices of the dead. See PP 684; 1 Cor. 10:20; cf. 1 Cor. 8:4–6.

29. Plauge. See Num. 25:8, 9, 18; PP 455.

30. Phinehas. See Num. 25:7, 8.

31. For righteousness. Compare Gen. 15:6. As a result of this act of faith, the Lord promised the continuance of the priesthood (see Num. 25:10–13).

32. Waters of strife. The sixth sin in the wilderness: the rebellion against Moses and Aaron at the waters of Meribah (see Num. 20:2–13).

Ill with Moses. See Num. 20:10–12; cf. Deut. 1:37; 3:26.

33. Spake unadvisedly. Heb. *bata'*, "to speak rashly," "to speak thoughtlessly" (see Vol. I, pp. 953, 954). The confession of the six sins in the wilderness is completed.

34. Did not destroy. The Israelites did not destroy the idolatrous nations, as God had commanded (see Ex. 23:32, 33; Deut. 7:2; Joshua 23:12, 13; Judges 1:21, 27; etc.). Obedience to this command was of the utmost importance, for it was contact with the heathen that dragged Israel to her ruin.

Verses 34–39 discuss the continued sinning after entering Canaan.

35. Learned their works. The details are given in vs. 36–39. To what levels did disobedience lower the Israelites! Here is a lesson for spiritual Israel.

36. Snare. See Ex. 23:33; 34:12; Deut. 7:16.

37. Sacrificed. The worship of Molech involved human sacrifice (see on Lev. 18:21; 1 Kings 11:7). This was one of the most abominable of the rites of the heathen.

Devils. See 1 Cor. 10:20; PP 685, 686.

39. Went a whoring. They committed spiritual adultery, breaking their covenant relationship with God. The relation between Israel and God is represented by the figure of marriage (see Jer. 3:14; Eze. 16).

40. Wrath. See Ps. 78:59. The idea runs like a dark thread throughout the story of the judges.

Verses 40–43 describe the punishment as a result of disobedience.

43. Many times. See Judges 2:16.

45. Remembered. This does not imply that God had forgotten His covenant. The Hebrew word for "remember" frequently signifies more than a retention in the conscious memory, or the sudden recalling of a fact that may have slipped from the mind. The word often denotes the action that results because a circumstance is "remembered." God will now act with reference to the covenant stipulations.

Mercies. Heb. *chasadim* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

46. To be pitied. See 1 Kings 8:50 (cf. Neh. 1:11; Dan. 1:9).

48. Amen. The doxology marks the close of Book Four (see Ps. 41:13; 72:18, 19; 89:52; see also p. 626 and Introduction to Ps. 105).

Praise ye the Lord. See on Ps. 104:35. Despite the long recital of Israel's stubbornness, rebellion, and sin, the psalmist closes on a high note of thanksgiving for God's mercy.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–48 8T 109–112; TM 98
1 DA 448
2 MH 101
9 PK 16
15 MH 312; 3T 171
16 PP 320
19, 20 PP 317
28 GC 556; PP 684
33 PP 420; SR 165
34–36 Ed 45
34–38 PP 544
37, 38 PP 686
40 PP 544

BOOK FIVE

PSALM 107

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 107 opens Book Five of the Psalms (see p. 626). In point of poetic beauty this poem takes its place with the most sublime productions in any literature. It is of unique construction and was evidently intended to be sung in responses. Each stanza is symmetrical in composition. First there is a description of the calamity, then a cry for help, followed by an immediate answer. Then comes a call for thanksgiving supplemented by the reason for the call. The double refrains with their variations are strikingly effective (see vs. 6–9, 13–16, 19–22, and 28–32). After the introduction (vs. 1–3), in which the redeemed are invited to praise God, the psalmist presents four striking thought sequences in four stanzas.

The first stanza (vs. 4–9) discusses God's watch care for desert wanderers. The second (vs. 10–16) portrays God as the liberator of the prisoners. The third stanza (vs. 17–22) sets God forth as the great healer. The fourth (vs. 23–32) presents God as the sovereign of the sea. At this point the literary structure of the poem changes. Verses 33–42 speak of the blessing that comes to the righteous and the curse that is the lot of the wicked. The psalm closes with an appeal to the wise to ponder the facts presented so that he may better understand God's loving-kindness (v. 43).

1. O give thanks. A general call exhorting men to lift their voices in a chorus of thanksgiving to Jehovah. This is the least men can do in return for what God has done for them. Praise is well pleasing to God, and our voices ought to be uplifted often in songs of gratitude.

Good. Heb. *ṭob*. Goodness is one of the great attributes of God. God is not only good in Himself, but also the fountain from which all goodness flows.

Mercy. Heb. *chesed*, "divine love" (see Additional Note on Ps. 36). The psalmist was conscious that God's goodness and mercy were following him constantly (see on Ps. 23:6). In all the trying circumstances of life it is comforting to know that the great heart of God is full of loving-kindness and tender mercy toward the children of men.

2. Let the redeemed. Through sin men have sold themselves to the adversary, but Heaven paid an infinite price to buy them back (see GC 416). The redeemed, of all people, have most reason to say that God is good and that His mercy is everlasting. Far more than we do, we should relate what Christ has done for us, and our love for Him will deepen as we give expression to it (see COL 298).

3. Gathered them. The message of redemption will penetrate to all the dark places of earth, and men out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people will respond with grateful hearts (see Matt. 24:14; Rev. 14:6–12).

4. They wandered. This has primary reference to the children of Israel. We, also, are pilgrims and have no abiding city here; but we are under the guidance of an all-wise God, who will lead us in the right way and finally take us to the heavenly city (see Heb. 11:10).

5. Their soul fainted. A graphic picture of their plight. Despair had taken hold of them because of their unfortunate circumstances. Such a condition does not befit the redeemed. God desires that His people be joyful. To those who claim to trust in Him, "despondency is sinful and unreasonable" (PK 164).

6. They cried. This refrain runs throughout the psalm (vs. 13, 19, 28). In their distress the people called out to the One who could bring help. When they came to an extremity, they began to pray (see on Judges 3:9).

7. Right way. Literally, "straight way," or "level way." The right way is the straight way. The paths of sin are crooked ways. The straight way is the quickest and easiest route to our eternal home.

8. Oh that men. Here the psalmist breaks out into an impassioned appeal to all to join with him in praise to the Redeemer. When we recall what God has done for us in rescuing us from the bondage of sin, surely we would be ungrateful if we did not blend our voices in praise and thanksgiving to the One who has so wonderfully wrought for us.

9. He satisfieth. Even in the wilderness, Israel's needs were supplied. God furnished them with water from the flinty rock and provided bread from heaven for them. The same God lives still. He will satisfy all who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt. 5:6). He never turns anyone away empty.

10. Sit in darkness. See on Ps. 23:4. Ancient prisons were usually dark vaults, and the feet and hands of the prisoners were often bound in fetters of iron. In this dismal, dark cell the accused would await his sentence. This is a picture of every child of Adam before the great Deliverer comes to open the prison doors and set him free. The work of the Redeemer was to open the prison to them that were bound and proclaim liberty to the captives (see Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:17, 18).

Shadow of death. See on Ps. 23:4.

11. Contemned the counsel. Not only did they disobey; they despised the counsel of God. When men and nations do not follow God's plan and are disloyal to Him, they bring upon themselves perplexity and trouble.

13. Then they cried. When we come to the end of our earthly resources and appeal to God, He never fails to answer. Again and again the children of Israel were defeated in battle and brought into subjection by the enemy, but as soon as they cried unto the Lord for help, He raised up a deliverer to rescue them (Judges 3:7–9, 12–15; 4:1–4; 6:1–14; etc.).

14. Shadow of death. See on Ps. 23:4.

15. Oh that men. See on vs. 8, 21.

16. Gates of brass. That is, "gates of copper, or bronze" (see on Ex. 25:3). In olden times, to secure the gates of cities, it was customary to cover them with thick plates of brass and iron. This was a protection against the enemy. But brazen gates or iron bars cannot secure a city against falling into the hands of the instrument chosen by God to deliver His people (see Isa. 45:2).

17. Because of their transgression. Literally, "from the way of their transgression," implying persistence in an evil course.

Are afflicted. Sin brings affliction on those who indulge in it. It may afford a certain false pleasure for the passing moment, but in the end it brings suffering and pain.

18. Their soul abhorreth. Compare Job 33:20–22. The fools (v. 17) have lost their appetite; they are drawing near to the grim gates of the tomb.

19. Then they cry. The great Healer hears the faintest whisper and sends immediate relief.

20. He sent his word. By His word, God made the heavens and all their host (see on Ps. 33:6). This word is manna to the hungry soul and the source of spiritual sustenance (see Jer. 15:16; Matt. 4:4). The fuller revelation of that word is seen in Christ, the living Word, who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14).

21. Oh that men. See on v. 8. Why should not men praise such a Healer, such a Life-giver, such a God! It is difficult to comprehend why men, for whom God has done so much, should be forgetful of His mercy. When the Master walked the plains of Palestine and went about healing all manner of sickness, He was constantly met with ingratitude. "Were there not ten cleansed," asked He, "but where are the nine?" Only one leper came back to give thanks, and he was a Samaritan (Luke 17:15–18).

22. Thanksgiving. Heb. *todah*, "song of thanksgiving." When accompanied with a disavowal of sin it represents confession. The sacrifice of an animal should have been accompanied with sincere consecration in order to be of value in the sight of God (see Isa. 1:11; Jer. 6:19, 20).

23. To the sea. In vs. 23–30 the psalmist describes a storm at sea. Suddenly the storm breaks, and the little ship is tossed up and down on the waves. The sailors are in dreadful fear and despair of their lives.

24. Wonders in the deep. Sailors have a wonderful opportunity to study the power and majesty of God. The One who rules the mighty deep and speaks to the raging billows will guide us safely to the other shore.

25. He commandeth. God is the Creator, and all the elements and the laws of nature are subject to His command. However, He is not responsible for all the calamities of nature (see GC 589, 590).

26. Their soul is melted. The sailors are fearful that death is awaiting them. All hope of reaching the shore has gone.

27. Are at their wit's end. Literally, "all their wisdom has proved confused." Their skill as navigators is of no avail, and their only hope is to appeal to the Master of the waves.

28. Then they cry. Above old ocean's wild roar the seamen's cry to God is heard, and the storm abates as suddenly as it arose.

29. A calm. God is in control of all nature. As He brings calm to the troubled sea, so He will whisper peace to the storm-tossed sailor on life's billows today. Above the din and roar of life's troubled waters the child of God can hear His voice in tender tones saying, "My peace I give unto you. … Let not your heart be troubled" (John 14:27).

30. Desired haven. There is a captain at the helm who will guide us safely into the heavenly harbor, the haven of our delight. "Ah, think to step ashore and that shore, heaven; to clasp a hand outstretched, and that hand, God's."

31. Oh that men. The fourth exhortation to praise God (see on vs. 8, 15, 21).

32. In the congregation. Praise to God should be frequently heard in the church.

The style of the psalm changes here. The refrain, which was characteristic of the four preceding stanzas, does not appear in the remainder of the psalm. The psalmist contrasts God's dealings with the righteous and the wicked.

33. Into a wilderness. Because of the wickedness of its inhabitants the well-watered and fertile land becomes barren and unfruitful.

34. Barrenness. Heb. *melechah*, "saltness," "salt country." When an enemy desired to doom a place and to render it unproductive, he sowed it with salt (see Judges 9:45; cf. Gen. 19:24–28).

36. Hungry to dwell. There is no poverty with the Lord, and those who trust Him will not fail of having their needs supplied.

37. Fruits of increase. God cooperates with those who cultivate the soil.

39. Minished. An archaic English word meaning "to diminish" or "to lessen." When God is not recognized as the One who causes the increase, men become proud of their material success. God humbles them with poverty in order to save their souls.

40. Poureth contempt. The changing fortunes of the mighty of earth help us to recognize "that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4:17).

41. On high. Contrast the experience of the princes (v. 40) with the exaltation of the poor and humble. Under God's blessing, those who were held in low esteem become prosperous.

42. Righteous shall see it. The many evidences of God's overruling providence attract the notice of the righteous, and their vision becomes illuminated by faith, whereas the wicked remain in doubt and perplexity.

43. Whoso is wise. The foolish man often sees only the immediate circumstances, and may say "in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. 14:1), but he who is wise, and observes God's dealings with the righteous and the wicked as portrayed in this remarkable psalm, sees in those dealings a revelation of God's love. However, such wisdom is not a product of earth, but comes down from heaven upon those who ask for it in faith (see James 1:5).

They shall understand. Such will first of all be painfully conscious of the weakness and wretchedness of man, and then will begin to grasp something of God's great loving-kindness.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–4 38T 112, 113
1, 2 MH 255; PK 566
8 PP 289; SC 108; 5T 318
9 PK 566
9–15 MH 255
10 4T 80; 8T 306
10, 13, 14 PK 273
17–20 MH 225
19 4T 328
20 PK 273
29, 30 DA 336
30 TM 516
43 SC 92

PSALM 108

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 108 is of a form suitable to be sung as a national hymn. The first section (vs. 1–5) corresponds in thought and wording to the second part of Ps. 57; the second section (vs. 6–13) is practically the same as the second division of Ps. 60 (for the background of these psalms see Introduction to Ps. 57 and to Ps. 60). The respective portions of these psalms may have been combined into Ps. 108 for liturgical purposes, and so used in the Temple service.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Heart is fixed. The psalmist had determined his course and would not deviate from it. Steadfastness of purpose is a trait of character that all should cultivate.

Verses 1–5 appear with slight variation as Ps. 57:7–11 (see comments there).

My glory. The psalmist will render praise to God with his intellect, tongue, poetic faculty, and musical skill. He has dedicated all his talents to his Maker.

2. Awake, psaltery. The sweet singer of Israel is not satisfied to use his voice alone; he calls for musical instruments to accompany him in his songs of praise. Those with musical talent have the privilege and duty of using that gift to glorify the Giver.

Awake early. The early hours of the morning spent in private devotion provide strength for the day's duties and a safeguard against temptation. The Saviour often rose to pray a great while before day (see DA 90; MH 52; see on Mark 3:13).

4. Above the heavens. God's merciful love and truth are boundless and deep. The earth cannot contain them. They stretch beyond the sky.

5. Be thou exalted. Man's praise of God should be according to the abundance of God's loving-kindness. The sound of the mighty chorus should fill the earth and all the courts of glory.

6. Thy beloved. The prayer of one godly man reaches out to many others, and often shapes the destiny of a whole nation (see James 5:17, 18). The beloved will be delivered by Him who loves them.

Verses 6–13 appear with slight variation as Ps. 60:5–12 (see comments there).

7. In his holiness. God's nature is holy, and that nature makes it impossible for Him to break His promise (see Num. 23:19; Titus 1:2). When God speaks, His word stands fast.

Valley of Succoth. See on Joshua 13:27.

8. Judah is my lawgiver. Judah was the royal tribe from which the scepter would not depart till Shiloh come (see Gen. 49:10).

9. Moab is my washpot. Moab was notorious for its pride (see Isa. 16:6). Here the psalmist compares this haughty nation to a vessel in which a victorious warrior washes his feet.

Philistia. Early in his reign David had subdued the Philistines (see on 2 Sam. 8:1). God will triumph over all the enemies of His people.

10. Strong city. See on Ps. 60:9. The psalmist looked to God to assist him to capture this stronghold, and he did not look in vain (see on 2 Sam. 8:14).

11. Hast cast us off. At the time, it seemed that God had forsaken His chosen people, but not so. He led the host of Israel against the impregnable heights of Edom, and they became servants of Israel (see on 1 Kings 11:15). Today He can bring us into the strong citadel of the enemy. Nothing can withstand those who trust in Him.

12. Vain. When human assistance is of no avail, divine help comes to our aid. When confidence in man is shaken, the child of God leans the more heavily on the arm of the Infinite.

13. Valiantly. God's help inspires us to help ourselves. From Him we derive courage, wisdom, and strength to gain the victory over our foes. With God for its leader the church may go forth conquering and to conquer.

PSALM 109

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 109 is dedicated to the chief musician. Probably it was intended to be sung for the tabernacle and Temple services. It is a warning against those who return hatred for love and ingratitude for kindness. The NT makes reference to a portion of this psalm as applying to the experience of Judas (see Acts 1:16–20). The psalm falls into three divisions: the psalmist appeals for help against his enemies (vs. 1–5); he invokes retribution against the leader of this treacherous group (vs. 6–20); he breaks forth into a song of thanksgiving to Jehovah after a plea for deliverance (vs. 21–31).

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Hold not thy peace. The enemies were slandering the psalmist and mocking his God. David knew his Lord so intimately and his confidence was so deep that he boldly asked his Friend to break the silence and to speak.

2. Lying tongue. False witnesses support the unfounded accusations against the psalmist. It is hard to endure lying reports, but we are admonished to rejoice when all manner of evil is spoken of us falsely for Christ's sake (Matt. 5:11).

3. Words of hatred. Compare Jer. 18:18.

4. Unto prayer. Rather than retaliate, the psalmist gave himself to prayer and intercession. Happy is the man who can find refuge from every trial and false accusation in the secret place of communion with God.

5. For my love. The kindness of the psalmist to his enemies was required by more severe hatred on their part. The greatest demonstration of love toward enemies was seen in Christ, the Son of God (see Rom. 5:7–10). There never was love manifested like His. Despite the manifestation of this love He was betrayed and crucified. Yet in His dying

agony His love for His enemies lost none of its ardor as He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

6. Wicked man over him. God often permits a wicked tyrant to control a sinful people.

7. Let his prayer become sin. Literally, "his prayer shall become sin." The verb here used is a simple future, as distinguished from the form specifying a wish. The prayer of the wicked does not proceed from true penitence, but from sorrow for the results of the sin. Such prayers God cannot accept (see Prov. 28:9; Isa. 1:15).

8. Let his days be few. The Hebrew allows the alternate translation, "his days will be few" (see on v. 7).

Office. Heb. *pequddah*, signifying the office of the overseer. This verse was cited by Peter as a sanction for filling the place of Judas by the election of another apostle (see Acts 1:20).

9. Fatherless. In this world of sin "it is inevitable that children should suffer from the consequences of parental wrongdoing" (PP 306; see on Joshua 7:15). Conversely, the Lord is gracious to the offspring of the righteous and extends mercy to their succeeding generations (Ex. 20:6).

11. Extortioner. One who puts out his money to usury. He is here represented as demanding everything that his debtor possesses.

12. To extend mercy. That is, to make mercy continue or last. While it is true that the Lord's love is everlasting (see Jer. 31:3), there comes an end to the pleadings of the Holy Spirit and to the extending of mercy to ungrateful sinners (see Gen. 6:3).

13. Generation following. The Israelite, with his strong sense of family solidarity, looked forward to his name living on in his descendants. The extinction of the family name was considered a terrible calamity (see on Gen. 38:8).

17. Let it come. Here, as in v. 7, the fate of the wicked is expressed, not so much in the form of a wish, but in the simple historical form, as the inevitable result of the decision that the wicked have pronounced upon themselves by their conduct.

20. Reward. Those who despite God's love and His grace bring a curse upon themselves. Their punishment is a reward for their actions, the inevitable result of their own choice.

23. Shadow. When the day declines, the shadow lengthens till it vanishes in the descending darkness.

Tossed up and down. Better, "shaken off." The psalmist feels as helpless as the poor locust.

26. Help me. In the concluding section of the psalm, the cry for help is renewed, and the psalmist casts himself wholly upon the mercy of God. The psalm closes with the joyous prospect that after the suffering will come the glory, after the cross, the crown.

28. Bless thou. What matters whether we are cursed by wicked men as long as we know that the blessing of Heaven is resting upon us?

29. Clothed with shame. Sin always brings shame and disgrace (see Gen. 3:7–11).

30. Praise him. We should praise the Lord publicly. He is ever at our side to help us and to save us from those enemies who are seeking to destroy us.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5 DA 265; GC 20

PSALM 110

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 110 was written by David (see Matt. 22:41–45; Mark 12:35–37; Luke 20:41–43). The psalm takes its place among the most majestic songs of Hebrew literature. It has been styled "the pearl of Messianic psalms." Christ is presented not only as King and Ruler of this world, but also, by God's solemn oath, as eternal Priest. Compare Zech. 6:13, where Messiah is referred to as both Priest and King.

Ugaritic parallels (see p. 618) are numerous in Ps. 110. It has been estimated that about 46 per cent of the vocabulary of all the psalms finds parallels in Ugaritic. In Ps. 110 the percentage is 71. The same high percentage is found also in Ps. 29 and 93.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. The Lord said unto my Lord. Substituting the Hebrew words for "Lord" we have the following, "*Yahweh* said unto *'adoni*" (see Vol. I, p. 35). According to Jesus' statement the conversation occurred between God the Father and God the Son. Christ is seated in the place of highest honor in the universe, the right hand of His Father (see Eph. 1:20–23; cf. 1 Cor. 15:24–28).

Footstool. See on Ps. 99:5.

2. Rod of thy strength. A common symbol of authority and power (see Jer. 48:17).

3. Thy people shall be willing. Literally, "thy people voluntary offerings." When the king musters his army for the great day when the enemies of Zion will be overthrown, there will be a ready response. The people will yield willing allegiance to their leader.

Beauties of holiness. Many Hebrew manuscripts, and Symmachus and Jerome, read, "mountains of holiness." If this reading is correct, it pictures the mountains of Zion as the rallying point of the armies of Israel.

The dew. Perhaps a figure of the vastness of the army (see 2 Sam. 17:11, 12), or of freshness and vigor (see Ps. 133:3; Hosea 14:5).

4. Repent. He who understands the end from the beginning does not change His purpose (see on 1 Sam. 15:11). Though man's failure may necessitate a temporary interruption of God's plan, yet in the end all things will be carried out according to His original purpose.

A priest for ever. The strongest possible language is employed to show that Christ is an eternal Priest. He is so by virtue of a promise of God confirmed by an oath (see Heb. 7:21). This settles the decree beyond all question.

Order of Melchizedek. In Christ the priesthood and the kingship are united as they were in Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God (see Gen. 14:18; Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1–3, 11, 15, 17, 24, 28).

5. Shall strike through kings. Earthly potentates will not be successful in opposing the work of the Lord. The Lord will make His cause to triumph over earthly rulers.

7. Drink of the brook. A figure probably suggesting refreshment in the midst of an arduous task. Weary armies and their leaders welcomed the opportunity of drinking water from a "brook in the way" (see on Judges 7:5).

Lift up the head. Denoting that all traces of weariness are gone, and the leader is ready to go forward with renewed vigor to accomplish the task at hand (see Luke 21:28).

PSALM 111

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 111 consists of twenty-two lines, each line beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. A similar construction is found in Ps. 112, and for this reason they have been called twin psalms (for a discussion of acrostic psalms, see p. 625). Ps. 111, 112 are psalms of praise and begin with "Hallelujah" (see on v. 1).

1. Praise ye the Lord. Heb. *halelu Yah*, the expression from which "hallelujah" is derived.

2. Sought out. The details of God's handiwork are not always apparent to the casual observer. They must be explored and discovered by eager study. As the miner digs in the earth to find its riches, so the works of God yield their treasure to him who is willing to dig for it.

4. To be remembered. The clause reads literally, "He made a memorial [or "remembrance," or "mention"] for his wonderful works." The Sabbath is a memorial of creation (Gen. 2:2, 3; DA 281). The memorial was held sacred by patriarchs and prophets. God reiterated and re-emphasized the sanctity of the Sabbath when He proclaimed His holy law from Sinai (Ex. 20:8–11). When here on earth Christ worshiped in the synagogue on the Sabbath day (see Mark 1:21; Luke 4:16). The apostle Paul, years after Christ's resurrection, observed the seventh-day Sabbath (see Acts 13:14; 17:2).

5. Meat. Heb. *ṭereph*, "food." As God made provision for Israel's wants in the wilderness by providing manna for them, so He will care for the needs of His people in times of distress (see Isa. 33:16; GC 626, 629).

7. Sure. From the Heb. *'aman*, "to be firmly established," "to be trustworthy." The commandments of God, in which man's duties are set forth, are trustworthy and true. They remain steadfast forever, they are unchangeable.

8. They stand fast. The Lord has certain immutable principles by which He governs the universe. With God there "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

9. Reverend. From the Heb. *yara'*, "to fear," either man (Gen. 50:19) or God (Deut. 6:13). The form of the verb here used, *nora'*, means literally, "to be feared," or "to be reverenced." *Nora'* occurs 44 times, but is rendered "reverend" only here. Elsewhere it is generally translated "terrible" (Deut. 7:21; Neh. 1:5; etc.). It is also translated "to be feared" (1 Chron. 16:25; Ps. 96:4), "dreadful" (Dan. 9:4), and "to be had in reverence" (Ps. 89:7). *Nora'*, though generally applied to God, is used also of things or acts (Ex. 34:10; Deut. 8:15; Ps. 45:4; etc.), though seemingly with reference to divine acts. *Nora'* is nowhere applied to human beings except in two instances, where it is applied to a nation (Isa. 18:2, 7), but even here the appellation seems to be used with reference to the acts of God. On the use of the title "reverend" see DA 613.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2–4ML 175
4 DA 281; 5T 74
7, 8 GC 288, 434; MB 81; PP 342
8 Ed 30
9 CG 538; DA 613; Ed 243; Ev 133; EW 70, 122; GW 178; MB 157; ML 282; PK 49, 236; PP 307; 1T 410
10 CG 23, 87, 316, 493; CT 108, 502; CSW 21; Ev 136; FE 136, 169, 328, 381; MYP 27, 190, 290, 329; PK 34; TM 161; 3T 491; 4T 27, 208, 425, 553; 5T 84; 8T 199 (More under Prov. 9:10)

PSALM 112

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 112 is a companion to the preceding psalm and has a similar acrostic construction (see Introduction to Ps. 111).

1. Delighteth greatly. The secret and source of all true happiness and prosperity is the fear of the Lord. Such fear leads to a cheerful and thorough obedience to God's commandments.

2. Mighty. Heb. *gibbor*, "vigorous," or "heroic [in battle]."

3. Righteousness endureth. The character of a good man is a reflection of the character of God. "A character formed according to the divine likeness is the only treasure that we can take from this world to the next" (COL 332).

4. Light in the darkness. The Lord is the light that arises in the darkness unto them that are sincere toward Him: He is "the Sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2). He is gracious and full of compassion. The adjectives here used are in the singular number, whereas the word for "upright" is in the plural. It seems clear, however, from the general tenor of the psalm that the godly man is being described. The righteous man shares the divine attributes. He becomes a partaker of the divine nature (see 2 Peter 1:4).

5. Discretion. Heb. *mishpaṭ*, "decision," or "judgment." The good man manifests good judgment. He has sanctified common sense.

6. Everlasting remembrance. The good man's name is ever blessed (see Prov. 10:7). As God caused Himself to be remembered by His marvelous works (Ps. 111:4), so the godly man is held in remembrance for his acts of mercy and kindness. No one desires to be forgotten. All like to be remembered.

7. Fixed. That is, "firm," or "established." The righteous man has a good conscience and a quiet trust; he is not like the wicked man, who is tortured continually by premonitions of misfortune (see Prov. 10:24).

8. Established. Literally, "supported," "sustained," or "braced upon" (see on Ps. 71:6). The heart of the righteous is supported by God, and rests upon a firm foundation of faith in Him.

9. He hath dispersed. That is, he is liberal, openhanded, and shares what he possesses with the needy. Because of his generous dealings he is constantly increasing (see Prov. 11:24).

10. Melt away. The wicked look on and are enraged at the final prosperity of the righteous. The sinner dies a disappointed man, and his final end is destruction. As wax melts before the sun and is no more, so will the end of the wicked be (see on Ps. 68:2).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4 DA 47; GC 346; ML 237; PK 378
5 MB 183
6 PP 481; TM 429
6, 7 ML 182

PSALM 113

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 113–118 constitute the Hallel, which is recited at the great feasts of the Jews. During the Passover, Ps. 113 and Ps. 114 were sung before the repast and Ps. 115–118 after the repast. Stanzas from these psalms were sung by Jesus and the disciples in the upper room the night of the betrayal (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26; Ed 166; DA 672). Ps. 113 consists of three equal stanzas, each of which contains three verses.

1. Praise ye the Lord. See on Ps. 104:35; Ps. 111:1; see also Ps. 148; 150.

3. Unto the going down. From early morning until late evening the song of praise was heard ascending from Israel's encampment. So it should be at the gatherings of God's people today. A lack of gratitude for the blessings of Heaven often marks the start of apostasy (Rom. 1:20–22).

4. All nations. God is pictured as enthroned in the heavens, with all nations under His control (see Dan. 2:21).

6. Humbleth himself. With all God's glorious majesty, there is nothing too small to pass His notice. What a comfort to weak and frail humanity to know that the Master of the universe is interested in all the affairs of our lives! This great truth has a depth of meaning that no human philosophy can ever fathom.

7. Out of the dunghill. A picture of deliverance from extreme poverty and social isolation.

8. With princes. A figure suggesting elevation to the highest rank and dignity (see Job 36:7; see on 2 Sam. 9:7). The Lord lifts the truly humble from the lowest pit and causes him to dwell on the highest place.

9. Joyful mother. Compare the experience of Hannah (1 Sam. 1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2, 3 Ed 166
3 PP 342
5, 6 Ed 132; MH 435; 8T 283

PSALM 114

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 114 is noted for its perfection of form and dramatic vividness. This poem consists of four stanzas of two verses each. In each stanza the dominant note is set forth in terse language.

2. Judah. Here, the land of Judah, as shown by the feminine form of the Hebrew verb. The division of the lines in this verse is rhythmical, not logical. There is no contrast intended between the words "Judah" and "Israel."

3. The sea saw it. The Red Sea here is personified and is represented as hastening to prepare a path for the children of Israel to march through on dry ground.

Jordan was driven back. The miraculous providences were seen at both the beginning and the ending of Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan. We can take courage in the fact that the same God who led us out of the Egyptian bondage of sin will conduct us safely through Jordan's stormy billows to the Land of Promise on the farther shore.

4. The mountains skipped. Evidently a poetical description of the earthquake that accompanied the giving of the law at Sinai (see Ex. 19:18). Between the two miraculous wonders of the Exodus from Egypt and the entrance into the Holy Land stands the great revelation of God when, with great solemnity, He gave His holy law at Sinai.

5. What ailed thee? The poet is asking nature to explain her strange behavior, to account for the fact that she seems to be turned out of her regular course.

7. Tremble. The answer to the questions raised in the preceding verses. The presence of God has changed the course of nature's laws.

8. Turned the rock. The God who made water flow from the rock in Rephidim and from the cliff at Kadesh (see Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:8–11) provides streams of living water for His faithful servants (see John 4:14). He who continues to drink of this water will never thirst, but the water will become in him a never-failing spring to refresh both himself and the weary fellow traveler along the heavenly way.

PSALM 115

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. Ps. 115 sets forth the absurdity of worshiping idols, which are the work of men's hands. The psalmist exhorts all the faithful to extol and praise the living God.

In the LXX, Ps. 114 and Ps. 115 are combined to form one psalm, which is numbered 113 (see p. 627).

1. Not unto us. A renunciation of self-praise. The psalmist is desirous that God should no longer be the object of insult and ridicule by the heathen.

Men are ever eager to ascribe praise to themselves or to have other lips praise them. They are likewise free in their flattery of others. Because of the tendency of the human heart toward pride, men are counseled to "beware of giving or receiving flattery or praise" (COL 161).

2. Where? God had manifested His power in Egypt when Pharaoh asked the question, "Who is the Lord?" (Ex. 5:2). Now the same mocking question is asked by the heathen, and the psalmist is concerned because God is seemingly allowing His name to be disparagingly spoken of in this manner.

3. In the heavens. The Lord of Israel reigns on high and is supreme above all opposing powers. His throne remains unshaken and His purposes unchanged despite threats from mortal men.

4. Idols. The carved gods of the heathen are but lifeless images. How unreasonable it is that men should worship and adore that which they themselves have made!

5. Speak not. These idols have no power to communicate with men. They cannot teach their worshipers, nor are they aware of the needs of those who appeal to them.

6. Hear not. Some heathen deities were represented by images with monstrous ears, but no prayer was ever heard by these gods. Taunting the prophets of Baal, Elijah asked them to shout more loudly to their heathen deity; but there was no response. Baal remained silent (see 1 Kings 18:27–29),

8. Like unto them. A man rises no higher than the object of his worship (see PP 19). In like manner, he who adores the Lord is changed into His image and advances from glory to glory (see 2 Cor. 3:18).

10. O house of Aaron. That is, the priests. As spiritual leaders and teachers, the priests should set the example of a firm trust in the Lord.

11. Fear the Lord. That is, all who reverence God. The call to trust confidingly in His almighty power is for all.

12. Hath been mindful. God never forgets the least of His children. He will remember His people at all times and all circumstances (see Isa. 49:15).

13. Small and great. The phrase thus translated is a Hebrew idiom meaning "young and old" when applied to persons. For example, the older of two brothers is always called the "large" or "great" and the younger is called the "small" or "little," even though the younger may be of greater stature than his brother. The expression does not have reference to physical size or social rank. The idiom is common in the Scriptures (see Gen. 19:11; Deut. 1:17; 1 Sam. 5:9; etc.).

15. Made heaven and earth. In contrast with the gods of the heathen, which themselves were shaped by human hands, our God is the omnipotent Creator, the Maker of all.

16. Hath he given. God created the earth to be the dwelling place of man (see Gen. 1:28; Isa. 45:18). "God made the world to enlarge heaven. He desired a larger family" (EGW RH June 25, 1908). This same planet will be the final home of the redeemed. He has promised that the meek "shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5).

17. Praise not. The dead are in a state of unconscious sleep and are oblivious of anything that is going on in earth or heaven. "The dead know not any thing" (Eccl. 9:5; cf. Ps. 146:4; 1 Thess. 4:13–17). The popular concept that the souls of men depart at death and exist in a state of conscious bliss in the realms above is denied by the psalmist's statement. One would naturally expect that such redeemed souls would be eager to ascribe praise to Him who wrought such marvelous redemption for them. But the dead sleep unconsciously in their graves and evince no praise.

18. But we. That is, we who are alive, in contrast with the dead (see v. 17).

For evermore.. That is, as long as life continues, for the dead cannot bless the Lord (see v. 17).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 PP 289; 5T 219
3 MB 156
8 PP 91
17 GC 546; 1T 299

PSALM 116

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 116 is a psalm of thanksgiving in which the psalmist celebrates an experience of personal deliverance. The psalm extols God's saving power.

In the LXX, Ps. 116 appears as two psalms: vs. 1–9 as Ps. 114 and vs. 10–19 as Ps. 115 (see p. 627).

1. Hath heard. The tense of the Hebrew verb permits the translation "is hearing." The meaning thus suggested is that the psalmist is praising God for repeated answers to prayer.

2. As long. The psalmist pledges consistency in his prayer habits.

3. Hell. Heb. *she'ol*, not a hell of torment but the figurative abode of the dead, both of the righteous and of the wicked (see on Prov. 15:11). This text lends no support to the doctrine of an ever-burning hell. The psalmist applies the expressions "sorrows of death" and "pains of hell" to himself as descriptive of experiences he passed through in this life and from which he had been delivered. Hence the expression "pains of hell" can have no connection with an experience after death. The trial through which the psalmist passed had evidently brought him nigh to death.

6. The simple. Heb. *pethi*, "inexperienced youth," or "simple youth." The LXX has *nepia*, "babes," the word employed in Matt. 11:25. As a loving father guards and guides the tender feet of his infant child, so the Lord in His mercy guides His children along life's pathway.

7. Rest. True rest is found only by trusting God fully. Such rest banishes anxiety and restlessness (see Matt. 11:29).

9. I will walk. To walk before (literally, "in the presence of") God means to be in harmony with Him. Two cannot walk together except they be agreed (see Amos 3:3).

10. I believed. Or, "I trusted."

Therefore. Better, "when." The psalmist's request for deliverance was lodged in strong faith.

11. In my haste. Under heavy affliction men often form hasty judgments concerning their fellow men; but hasty speaking is often followed by bitter remorse. Though men appear deceitful and are frequently unreliable, the situation is seldom as hopeless as it at first appears.

12. His benefits. When apparently forsaken by men from whom we expected assistance, we learn to appreciate the help and benefit that come from heaven. The psalmist wonders how he can best express his gratitude to God for all the benefits bestowed upon him.

14. Pay my vows. It is a serious thing not to pay vows made to the Lord (see Acts 5:1–10).

15. Death of his saints. The Lord does not regard with indifference the death of His saints (see Matt. 10:29–39). Guardian angels accompany the saints through the valley of the shadow of death, mark their resting places, and are the first to greet them in the glorious resurrection morning (Ed 305). It is said that many of the persecuted Christians in the early church went to martyrdom repeating this verse and that its message buoyed up their courage as they passed into the dark valley.

17. Thanksgiving. See on Ps. 107:22.

18. Pay my vows. See on v. 14.

19. In the courts. Praise to God is not to be confined to the closet. Men's voices bearing testimony to God's goodness should be heard in the assembly of the saints. Public praise as well as private devotion is commended in the Word of God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–8Ed 166
12 PP 187; 5T 87, 220
12–14DA 348; MH 101
13 5T 317
15 5T 317
18, 19 PP 539

PSALM 117

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 117 is an invitation to all nations to praise the Lord for His merciful kindness to His people. It is the shortest of the psalms, nevertheless lofty in its theme. "Before leaving the upper chamber, the Saviour led His disciples in a song of praise. His voice was heard, not in the strains of some mournful lament, but in the joyful notes of the Passover hallel. … Psalm 117" (DA 672).

In the LXX the "hallelujah" closing Ps 116 begins Ps. 117. Likewise the "hallelujah" closing Ps. 117 begins Ps. 118.

1. All ye people. No tribe or nation is omitted in the glorious invitation to praise the Lord. Paul quotes the words of this verse, showing that in Christ God's mercy has been extended to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews (Rom. 15:11).

2. Merciful kindness. Heb. *chesed*, "divine love" (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

Is great. Heb. *gabar*, "to excel."

Truth. Heb. *'emeth*, a word denoting "firmness," "trustworthiness," "stability," "faithfulness," as well as "truth." These attributes of God are as eternal as God Himself.

In the midst of human instability and insecurity the child of God may rest securely in God's love.

Praise ye the Lord. The psalm concludes with another "hallelujah."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 DA 672

PSALM 118

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 118 is a national hymn of thanksgiving. It has been generally regarded as composed for some national festival. The psalm seems to fall into two main divisions: vs. 1–19, believed to have been sung by the procession of Israelites on their way to the Temple to offer sacrifices or to celebrate some festival; v. 19 being recited by the company as it reached the gate and requested permission to enter; vs. 20–28, the conversation between those at the Temple and those who have arrived; and finally, a mighty chorus by the entire group (v. 29).

1. O give thanks. The theme of the psalm is thanksgiving. All are invited to join in this great chorus of praise.

Mercy. Heb. *chesed*, "love" (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

2. Let Israel now say. Israel had been the special recipient of God's love. The Lord had delivered the people from Egypt and had led them through the wilderness to the Land of Promise.

3. House of Aaron. The sons of Aaron were set apart to their sacred office.

4. That fear. All who have accepted the worship of Jehovah, whether Jew or Gentile, priests or people, are earnestly exhorted to join in the song of praise.

5. Large place. Or, "roomy place." That is, the Lord brings us out to a place where we are not distressed by circumstances, but where we are free to move about.

6. On my side. Literally, "for me." The psalmist was calm and confident although in the midst of enemies who were continually plotting to take his life. He knew that if the Lord was for him, no one could stand against him (see Rom. 8:31).

7. Taketh my part. God joins with those who help the psalmist and leads him on to victory.

My desire. These words are not in the Hebrew text. The clause reads literally, "And I shall look at them that hate me."

8. In the Lord. Confidence placed in man is often betrayed, but the Lord never fails those who place their confidence in Him.

9. In princes. Even those who are noble in rank and mighty in power cannot be wholly relied upon. Despite his best intentions man is liable to fail because of his human weaknesses.

12. Fire of thorns. Such a fire blazes up brilliantly and fiercely for a brief span and then rapidly dies down.

14. My strength and song. In the Hebrew this verse is identical with the first part of Ex. 15:2. The psalmist may have recalled Israel's great deliverance at the Red Sea. The Deliverer who rescued the Israelites from Egypt still lives.

15. Tabernacles. Literally, "tents," or "dwellings."

17. I shall not die. The psalmist expresses his assurance that at this time he would not die and thus give cause for his enemies to rejoice. When gloom and darkness have encircled the saints of God and they have despaired of life, this text has brought comfort to their discouraged hearts. These words were spoken by the great English Reformer,

John Wycliffe, who, from his bed of illness, announced that he would live to declare the evil deeds of the friars (see GC 88).

18. The Lord hath chastened me. From time to time the Lord permits affliction to come to His people in order to wean them away from the things of earth. The chastening rod seems hard, but it is administered by an all-wise and all-loving hand (see Job 5:17; Prov. 3:11; Heb. 12:5, 7, 11).

19. Gates of righteousness. Evidently a reference to the gates of the Temple, perhaps called "gates of righteousness" because of the standard of righteousness to which God was seeking to lead those who entered there.

21. Thou hast heard me. Literally, "thou hast answered me."

22. The stone. A prophecy based on an actual historical incident that occurred during the building of Solomon's Temple (see DA 597, 598).

The head stone. That is, the chief stone of the corner. Isaiah was shown that this stone was a symbol of Christ (Isa. 8:13–15; 28:16; cf. Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:6). In His humiliation Christ was despised and rejected, but in His glorification He has become the head of all things both in heaven and in earth (Eph. 1:22).

23. Lord's doing. The exaltation of Christ is not the work of man. God Himself "hath highly exalted him" (Phil. 2:9).

24. The day. This verse has been interpreted by Athanasius, Adam Clarke, Albert Barnes, and others as referring to Sunday as the day of worship for the NT church. One may well ask how this passage, without any contextual relationship to any weekly day of worship, could be applied to the first day of the week. These commentators make such an application by connecting v. 24 with vs. 22, 23. They claim that since Christ is the chief cornerstone of His church (see vs. 22, 23), and the whole structure of Christianity is built on Him, therefore the day of His resurrection is the day when He was made "head stone of the corner," and that this resurrection day is the day spoken of in v. 24.

Other commentators reject this interpretation, asserting that they see no basis in the context for a reference to any day of weekly worship. Among this latter group are Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and many modern expositors. They believe that Ps. 118 was composed either in connection with the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles of Nehemiah's time (see Neh. 8:14–18), and hence apply the expression "this is the day" to that event, or in connection with whatever other special day of rejoicing the psalm was intended to celebrate.

Ps. 118 is a congregational song of praise. Verse 19 seems to picture a group of worshipers standing before the gates of the Temple crying for admittance. Verse 20 gives the response of the priests within the Temple. "This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it" (RSV). As the procession enters the sacred precincts, they cry in ecstasy, "This is the day, etc." Verses 20, 24 both begin with the Hebrew demonstrative pronoun *zeh*. In v. 20 the text points to the gate, a present reality. Verse 24 points to the day on which the gate was being entered, also a present reality. Patently, Sunday is not even hinted at in this text.

25. Save now. Heb. *hoshia'ah nna'*, which may also be translated "save, I pray thee." The "Hosanna" sung on the occasion of the triumphal entry (see Matt. 21:9) apparently had its origin in these two Hebrew words.

26. Blessed be he. When Christ rode in triumph into Jerusalem the disciples exclaimed, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Luke 19:38).

27. Shewed us light. As God brought forth light at creation's morn (see Gen. 1:15), so He will banish the darkness of the night of calamity and reveal the light of His favor.

Sacrifice. Heb. *chag*, "a festival." *Chag* occurs 61 times and is translated "sacrifice" only here and in Ex. 23:18 and Isa. 29:1. The translation is open to question, and many translators prefer to be consistent by rendering *chag* as "festival" or "feast" in these three instances also. For "cords" (Heb. *'abothim*) some of the ancient versions read, "boughs." This combination of ideas suggests a highly decorative feast, with boughs decorating the procession or the route of the procession all the way to the "horns of the altar." There seems to be no satisfactory explanation of the passage if the original translation is retained.

29. O give thanks. A fitting close to such a royal psalm.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

8, 9 5T 427
17 1T 96
19 PP 539
22 DA 597
26 DA 592
27 1T 169, 398

PSALM 119

Introduction.—Ps. 119 sets forth the joy and happiness that come to the man who takes the law of the Lord as his counsel and guide.

The psalm is acrostic, consisting of 22 sections, each containing 8 verses, representing the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet (see p. 14). In the Hebrew all the verses of the first section begin with *'aleph*, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; all the verses of the second section begin with *beth*, the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet; etc.

On the Davidic authorship of Ps. 119, see DA 398, GW 257, 4T 534. The first verse is really the text upon which the rest of the psalm is a discourse. All the verses of the psalm, with the exception of v. 122, contain some reference to God's expressed revelation to man.

The following appear in the *'aleph* section: "law," "testimonies," "ways," "precepts," "statutes," "commandments," and "judgments." These expressions point to the different aspects of divine revelation (see on Ps. 19:7). These variations add much beauty to the psalm and avoid the monotonous repetition of the same word.

1. Blessed. Heb. *'ashre* (see on Ps. 1:1). The psalm begins by pronouncing a blessing upon those who are obedient to the law of the Lord.

Undefiled. Heb. *temimim*, "complete," "blameless," translated "perfect" in Gen. 6:9, but better rendered "blameless."

Who walk. A holy life is described as walking in the law.

Law. Heb. *torah*, "teaching" or "instruction" (see on Deut. 31:9; Ps. 19:7; Prov. 3:1).

2. Testimonies. See on Ps. 19:7.

Whole heart. There must not be a divided heart in the Lord's service (see Deut. 6:5; Matt. 6:24; 12:30; Luke 16:13).

3. Do no iniquity. That is, their whole purpose is to be in harmony with God's will.

4. Precepts. Heb. *piqqudim*, "orders," "precepts," denoting specific injunctions pointing out our duty to God (see on Ps. 19:8). God's precepts require careful obedience and cannot be broken without disastrous results, whether it be to men or to nations.

5. Statutes. Heb. *chuqqim*, "prescribed matters," "statutes," from *chaqaq*, "to engrave" or "to inscribe."

6. Commandments. Heb. *miṣwoth*, "orders," "commands" (see on Ps. 19:8).

7. Learned. The psalmist represents himself as a student in the school of the law.

Judgments. Heb. *mishpaṭim*, "decisions," or "judgments" (see on Ps. 19:9). *Mishpaṭim* may also be used in the sense of "the judicial acts of God."

8. Forsake me not. When men or nations persist in forsaking the law, God can do no other than to leave them to their choice (see Hosea 4:17). He never forsakes those who do not forsake His law.

9. Thy word. Victory in temptation comes to those who effectively employ the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). "It is written" was the way the Master met Satan's subtle allurements (see Matt. 4:4, 7, 10). The youth of today must employ the same spiritual weapons. The mind must constantly feed upon the Word, else the defenses of soul will break down, and Satan will gain the advantage. A neglect to study and to meditate upon the Word for even one day results in serious loss.

10. O let me not wander. While we must exert all the powers of the soul in the conflict against sin, we still need the Lord's help. Sin can be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead (see DA 671), but God can do nothing for us without our consent and cooperation (see DA 668). We are so prone to wander. Like the sheep on the mountainside, how often we go astray (see Isa. 53:6).

11. Have I hid. This verse contains the secret of true Christian living. A mere knowledge of the Word will not keep us from sin, but when the Word is treasured up in the heart we have the weapons with which to meet and conquer the wily foe (see Job 23:12; Prov. 2:1, 9; Jer. 31:33).

12. Blessed art thou. See on Ps. 63:4.

Teach me. We all need to be learners in God's school. What a privilege to ask for, and what a privilege to receive, a divine Instructor (see John 14:26; 16:13)!

13. Have I declared. Every faithful disciple will tell others of his great joy in the Word of God and will invite them to share in this blessed experience (see Deut. 6:7; cf. Matt. 12:35).

14. In all riches. The believer in the Word finds more satisfaction in its treasures than does the man of wealth in earthly riches. The Word of God is much more to be desired than gold or precious stones. Earthly treasures fade, but the treasures of heaven endure unto all eternity (see Matt. 6:19–21).

15. I will meditate. When the soul meditates on the truths of the Word of God, these truths become a part of the life. A hasty reading without reflection accomplishes but little good. Quiet meditation permits the Holy Spirit to make appropriate application of the general statements of principle to individual experience. "One reason that there is not

more sincere piety and religious fervor, is because the mind is occupied with unimportant things and there is no time to meditate, search the Scriptures or pray" (CW 125).

Meditation helps to guard against temptation. The mind that is filled with the precepts of God has no room for cheap and debasing thoughts. The young man who has his mind thus stored will tread a pure path.

16. I will delight myself. Delight naturally follows meditation, being the outcome or fruit of it. The law ceases to be a burden and becomes the source of greatest joy and delight. Those who live in harmony with heaven thrill with pleasure as the sacred pages of the Word of God are read. True religion does not inhibit man's powers, it gives them their greatest scope.

17. Deal bountifully. Compare Ps. 13:3, 6. Life and obedience are closely connected (see Luke 10:28).

18. Open. Heb. *galah*, "to uncover," "to reveal." The psalmist prays that whatever is covering his eyes may be removed. We cannot penetrate the deep things of God with our natural perceptive powers. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God " (1 Cor. 2:14). We need to pray that the Lord will take the dimness away from our soul, and that He will grant to us the Holy Spirit, who alone can reveal the things of God to us (1 Cor. 2:10).

19. Stranger. Heb. *ger*, "sojourner," one who stays temporarily at a place without full civic rights. Our stay here on earth is only temporary; heaven is our home (see Heb. 11:13, 14).

Hide not thy commandments. Being in an alien land, the psalmist needs a chart to guide him. This he finds in God's commandments.

20. My soul breaketh. David was overwhelmed with a longing desire for a better understanding of God's judgments. God delights to satisfy such yearnings (see Matt. 5:6).

21. Rebuked the proud. The proud are self-sufficient and refuse to walk the way of God's commandments. The humble know that "the way of man is not in himself" (Jer. 10:23). They recognize their need of God's help to keep their feet from straying.

23. Princes. See on v. 161.

24. Counsellors. Instead of following the counsel of the "princes" (v. 23), who were criticizing his conduct, the psalmist chose to guide his life by the criterion of God's revealed will.

25. Cleaveth unto the dust. A figure denoting deep distress (see Ps. 22:29; 44:25).

Quicken. Or, "revive."

26. Declared my ways. The psalmist had opened the secrets of his life to God.

27. To understand. David longed for a deeper insight into God's precepts. He did not wish to obey them blindly. He desired an intelligent grasp of their far-reaching claims.

28. Melteth. Heb. *dalaph*, a word occurring only three times. In Eccl. 10:18 it is used of a roof dripping water, and in Job 16:20 presumably of weeping, as possibly here also. The LXX and the Vulgate read "sleepeth."

It is better to be melted with sorrow than to be hardened by stubbornness. The Lord delights to bind up the wounds of the soul that is torn. Prayer is a wonderful blessing in such times of sorrow.

29. Way of lying. The true-born child of God turns away from all falsehood and speaks "the truth in his heart" (see Ps. 15:2).

30. Chosen. The psalmist chose the way of faithfulness and truth rather than the "way of lying" (v. 29). There are only two ways—the way of life and the way of death—and each one must make his own choice. Upon that choice depends eternal destiny.

31. Stuck. Heb. *dabaq*, "to cleave," "to cling to." David's choice was not a fickle one; he had a firm determination to remain steadfast.

32. Enlarge my heart. Perhaps in the sense of removing the restrictions of anxieties and oppressing fears. Those who are cumbered with anxiety and doubt are not able to enjoy the full blessings of heaven.

33. Teach. Heb. *yarah*, "to teach," "direct," or "instruct." The noun *torah* (law) is derived from this verb (see on v. 1). There is no teacher like God (see Job 36:22).

Keep it. A pledge of constancy in religious experience (see Matt. 24:13; Phil. 1:6).

34. Give me understanding. See on Prov. 1:1, 20.

With my whole heart. See on v. 2.

35. I delight. See on Ps. 40:8.

36. Covetousness. Heb. *beṣa'*, "profit," "gain," translated "gain" in Prov. 1:19; Judges 5:19; Job 22:3; etc. To obey the commandments of God will ensure against falling a prey to an inordinate desire for gain (see Col. 3:5).

37. Beholding vanity. If the eyes do not behold, the heart is less likely to covet.

38. Stablish thy word. That is, make Thy word sure to me, and make me sure of it. The more men study the Word of God, the more likely are they to be certain of its verity and stability (see on Ps. 19:9; Prov. 1:7).

Fear. As the Word of God becomes established in the heart, reverence for God will be seen in the life. Those who are devoted to God's fear are delivered from other fear.

39. My reproach. Probably a reference to the scorn which the psalmist feels men would manifest toward him if he failed to live up to his profession, or a reference to the displeasure of God at his waywardness. However, the fear (from the Heb. *yagar*) mentioned in this verse is very different from the godly fear (Heb. *yir'ah*, "holy reverence") to which the psalmist makes reference in v. 38.

Good. God's judgments are good, and they should not be brought into disrepute through any misconduct on the part of those who claim to order their lives by them.

40. Quicken me. The psalmist needed new power to meet new emergencies, so he asked for revivifying strength (see v. 37).

In thy righteousness. Those who are clothed with the righteousness of Christ are allied with heaven. They will constantly be receiving fresh endowments of physical and mental powers (DA 827).

41. Mercies. Heb. *chesed*, "divine love" (see Additional Note on Ps. 36). The supreme evidence of the love that God had for us is in the gift of His Son for the salvation of the human race (1 John 4:9, 10). Were it not for God's merciful love no man could be saved.

According to thy word. In the Word of God the way of salvation is made so clear that none need miss it. "God has spoken in the plainest language upon every subject that affects the salvation of the soul" (EGW RH Feb. 5, 1901). The Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation are a commentary on God's love and mercy as these attributes operate, bringing salvation to sinners.

42. Wherewith to answer. Compare 1 Peter 3:15. A victorious Christian is in himself the greatest argument in favor of true godliness (see GW 122).

43. Take not the word. This verse seems to be connected with v. 42. If so, the psalmist prays that when he speaks in defense of his faith, he may speak with freedom and in a manner worthy of his high profession.

45. At liberty. Literally, "in a broad place." There is nothing restricted or narrow about obeying the law of God. It has been well said that obedience to law is liberty. There is no bondage in true holiness (see on Prov. 3:1). But to the unconverted man, God's presence appears as a constant restraint, and God's character an expression of "Thou shalt not."

46. Before kings. The man who lives in the company of the King of kings need not fear the presence of an earthly ruler. Compare the experiences of Daniel (Dan. 5:17), Nehemiah (Neh. 2:1–7), and Paul (Acts 26:27).

47. Delight myself. See on Ps. 40:8. Men often think of commands as calculated to engender the opposite of joy, but not so with God's commands. He who made us knows what is for our highest good.

48. Lift up. Possibly a reference to lifting up the hands in prayer (see Ps. 28:2).

49. Caused me to hope. The words of God are a solid foundation upon which men may safely build their hope (see Matt. 7:24–27). The Lord not only has given us His Word, but has also implanted hope in our hearts in that blessed Word.

50. For. Better, "that." God's Word is a solace in every time of trial. Those who are in need of comfort will find a never-failing supply in the Word of God. Even if the divine solace does not remove the affliction, it will lift the distressed above the affliction.

51. Proud. Heb. *zedim*, "insolent," "presumptuous." These godless souls scorned and ridiculed the psalmist for his belief in God, but he refused to swerve from obedience to the law of God. The wicked delight in mocking the righteous, but the mockery, far from disheartening, should serve to strengthen the resolve of the righteous to follow God's commandments.

52. Old. Heb. *'olam*, an expression denoting a time of long duration without necessarily any reference to perpetuity (see on Ex. 12:14; 21:6).

Comforted myself. To recall the Lord's dealings with His saints in former times is a source of never-failing solace and of constant comfort. It is fitting that we should review from time to time the providential leadings of the Lord in our own past experience. This will give us present courage and future hope.

53. Horror. Heb. *zal'aphah*, "irritation," "indignation." As the psalmist thought of the wicked who did not observe God's law, he was seized with indignation. He was amazed that men could be so callous and careless. That the wicked mocked him did not seem to cause him as great concern or alarm as the fact that they were forsaking the law. He knew that eventually they would be destroyed because of this.

54. My pilgrimage. Pilgrim songs cheer the lonely wayfarer (see Ed 167, 168). The psalmist had composed many such hymns and delighted to sing them. We are pilgrims on this earth. Our true home is heaven, and even now we can sing the songs of that fair domain. The theme of our songs should be that of the psalmist, the wonderful character of God as revealed in the law.

55. In the night. The sleepless hours of the night may be profitably spent in meditating upon God and His law. On the importance of meditation see on v. 15.

56. This I had. Literally, "this was to me," that is, "this came to me," "this happened to me." The psalmist had this comfort, this courage, this power to sing, and this hope, because he was obeying God's precepts. All of these blessings come in the path of obedience.

57. My portion. Compare Ps. 16:5; 73:26. The Christian's greatest possession is his God.

58. Intreated thy favour. Compare Ps. 45:12.

59. Thought on my ways. Self-examination is essential to Christian growth. The formation of a noble Christian character is not an easy matter. We must criticize ourselves closely and not allow one unfavorable trait to go uncorrected (see COL 331). The reason many fall so readily into temptation is that they do not take their sins to heart and mourn over them.

60. I made haste. In view of his past the psalmist (see v. 59) turned with all speed from his own evil way to the path of righteousness. When conviction comes to us, it is well that we promptly obey. Delay is dangerous. Procrastination is the thief not only of time but also of eternity.

61. Have robbed. Literally, "have surrounded." Wicked men had banded together and encircled him, so that there seemed to be no way of escape. They could not, however, keep him away from God, nor God away from him. The consciousness of his fidelity to the law gave him courage in the face of his foes.

62. At midnight. The hours of midnight darkness, while others slept and all was peaceful and quiet, were spent in praise and devotion (see on v. 55).

63. Companion. Those who love God find their dearest friends among God's people. Like attracts like, and a man is known by the company he selects.

64. Full of thy mercy. There is no place where God's loving-kindness is not found. We may be exiled from home, but no power can banish us from the loving care of God.

65. Dealt well with. As the psalmist reviews his life, he feels that God has been good to him. Although at times he had passed through difficult and trying experiences, the Lord had always been by his side.

66. Good judgment. David desired delicate moral discernment and good taste in all the affairs of life. These qualities are gifts of the Spirit, granted to those who seek to bring their lives into complete harmony with the revealed will of God.

67. Afflicted. Many of our greatest spiritual lessons and our most precious experiences are found in the valley of affliction.

"The tree roots more fast
That hath withstood the winter blast!"

Went astray. The suffering through which the psalmist passed brought him back to the right way (see on Ps. 38:3).

68. Good. Even in affliction men may trace the goodness of God. Fretful repinings are both sinful and unreasonable (see 5T 313, 314).

69. Forged. Literally, "smeared," "besmirched."

70. Fat as grease. Perhaps designating the hearts of these wicked men as insensible to the finer things of the spiritual life. While others indulged in sensual pleasures, the psalmist found his delight in meditating upon the law.

71. Good for me. Although the affliction often comes from evil men, it is overruled by God for good (see on Ps. 38:3). Though the sorrow and suffering seem hard to bear, the lessons learned from such experiences are invaluable in the development of the Christian character.

72. Gold and silver. The value of money is not to be compared with the value of truth. Worldly possessions often disappear, but no one can deprive us of the blessings that come from obeying God's law.

73. Fashioned. Or, "established" (see Deut. 32:6). Inasmuch as God had made his bodily frame, David asks the Lord to perfect his spiritual understanding.

74. Will be glad. The righteous will rejoice when they see the marvelous transformation that God has wrought in the psalmist. Those who radiate hope are a source of joy to others.

75. Right. All God's laws are in perfect conformity with the standard of righteousness.

Faithfulness. God is faithful. He overrules affliction for purposes of mercy (see Lam. 3:33). He never asks us to endure more than we can bear (see 1 Cor. 10:13).

76. Comfort. See on v. 50.

77. Live. See Acts 17:28.

78. Proud. Heb. *zedim* (see on v. 51).

80. Sound. Heb. *tamim*, "complete," "blameless" (see on v. 1). A blameless heart is more important than the high esteem of friends. "Completeness" of experience comes through a union with Christ, who supplies enabling power for obedience (Rom. 8:1–4). Only those whose hearts are purified from defilement will be able to stand in the trials of the last days (see GC 620). Outward profession will be of no avail without the inward possession of the Spirit of Christ.

81. Fainteth. Heb. *kalah*, literally, "to come to an end." When used in connection with "soul" the expression means "to be consumed with longing."

82. Fail. Heb. *kalah* (see on v. 81). The eyes too are consumed with longing as the looked-for hope is deferred.

83. Bottle. Some water containers were anciently made of skin. David likens himself to a dried-up or smoke-shriveled skin bottle.

84. How many? Compare Ps. 90:10, 12.

85. Pits. The figure is borrowed from the pits used by hunters to catch their prey. The enemy was endeavoring by every possible means to entrap David (see Jer. 18:20, 22).

After thy law. That is, according to Thy law.

86. Faithful. God's commandments, like His character, are faithful (see on v. 75).

87. Almost consumed. The psalmist determined that nothing that men could do to him would divert him from his purpose of obeying God's holy precepts. God honors the man who is prepared to die rather than deviate from the right way.

88. Quicken me. Or, "revive me."

89. Settled. God's word is settled for all time and is unchangeable. It is high above the accidents of chance and stands fast both in heaven and in earth. Man's teachings concerning the word may change, but the word stands immovable.

90. It abideth. The constancy of nature may be considered an assurance of God's faithfulness in His dealings with His children. God is faithful to His promises in all ages, at all times, and in all places.

91. Ordinances. Heb. *mishpaṭim*, "decisions," or "judgments" (see on v. 7). Heaven and earth obey the decrees of their Creator. From the mightiest creature to the minutest insect, from the largest sun to the smallest atom, all are obedient to the Omnipotent God (see 8T 259, 260).

92. Perished. In God's revelation of Himself David received new hope and fresh courage, which revived his drooping spirit. The same word that preserves the heavens and the earth will also preserve and sustain God's people in their time of greatest trial and deepest distress.

93. Never forget. After we have once felt the quickening power of God's Word we should never go back on our experience. Forgetfulness of God's leading is displeasing to God and brings discouragement to us. "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way of the Lord has led us" (TM 31).

94. I am thine. Compare 1 John 3:1.

95. Consider. The power in the Word enabled the psalmist to be victorious over all the plots of his enemies. If the enemy of souls is unable to detract our minds from thinking and meditating upon the Holy Word, he will be unsuccessful in his warfare against us.

96. Perfection. Heb. *tiklah*, a word occurring only here, and hence of doubtful shade of meaning. *Tiklah* comes from the root *kalah*, meaning "to end," "to complete," "to finish," and hence may designate "a boundary," "a limit." The LXX has *peras*, which means precisely this. Apparently the psalmist saw a limitation to everything human, but by contrast the revelation of God appeared unfathomable.

Exceeding broad. There is no end to the treasures to be found in contemplating the great truths contained in God's law. We can never exhaust its theme. It is like a fountain that never runs dry. It is a perfect representation of divine holiness, and we are led to acknowledge how imperfect we are when we judge our lives by its exalted standards.

97. How love I! We may read, hear, speak, and preach about God's law, but unless we love its precepts, no profit will accrue. Love and law are closely associated. "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). Only in a heart where love dwells can the law of God be truly reverenced and obeyed.

98. Wiser. He who guides his life by God's precepts is truly wise. He who is taught of God has a practical wisdom with which no enemy of truth can compete (see Ed 124; CW 175).

100. The ancients. Those who apply themselves diligently to a study of God's Word have more real knowledge than the aged philosopher who has not stooped to drink at the source of all true wisdom (see on v. 98).

101. Refrained. David endeavored to avoid that which would hinder his spiritual progress. The bypaths of sin may be smooth and flowery, but those who are allured by them forsake the Word of God.

103. Sweet. Not only had the psalmist listened to the words of God; he had fed upon them. They were sweeter than honey to him (see Ps. 19:10).

104. Understanding. The man of true understanding detests sin and falsehood, and loves righteousness and truth.

105. Lamp. The Word of God illuminates the way so that men may walk safely in the spiritual darkness of this world. He who has this light to guide him need not stumble even though his path is beset with evil (see 2 Peter 1:19).

106. I will perform. The psalmist pledged to obey the law, and manifested great care in carrying out this pledge. Similarly we should put forth every effort to cooperate with God and to keep every worth-while resolution of the heart.

107. Afflicted. Service to God does not guarantee freedom from difficulties or sufferings (Phil. 1:29). Trials develop noble characters.

108. Of my mouth. Evidently offerings of thanksgiving and prayer. The writer pleads with the Lord to accept these as he offers them willingly. The Lord delights in voluntary offerings.

109. In my hand. A figure of peril (see 1 Sam. 19:5). The psalmist expresses his resolve not to turn aside to find safety in sin and thus forget the law; he will risk his life, if need be, for the sake of the law.

112. Inclined mine heart. See on Ps. 66:18.

114. Hiding place. When we are beset with temptation we can find our refuge in God. When the darts of the enemy are being hurled at us, we can turn them aside by the "shield of faith" (Eph. 6:16). When we are afflicted by gloom and discouragement, we can always find hope in God's Word.

115. Depart from me. See 1 Cor. 5:9; 2 Thess. 3:14. David is anxious not to be in the company of the wicked, for they stunt his spiritual growth. It is well to cultivate the friendship of those whose influence elevates to a higher level of spirituality.

116. That I may live. The psalmist felt that he was so dependent upon God's sustaining power that he could not live without it.

Not be ashamed. We need never be ashamed of our hope, for it rests upon the sure foundation of God's Word (see Rom. 5:5; Phil. 1:20; 1 John 2:28).

117. Continually. The ability to persevere to the end comes through divine power (see Jude 24).

118. Trodden down. Or, "rejected," "tossed aside." By their own choice the wicked destroy themselves (see 5T 120; cf. Hosea 13:9). They have no desire to walk with God, and God has no alternative other than to destroy them.

119. Like dross. The dross and the precious metal are together now, but soon there will come a day of separation, when the Refiner will accomplish His work of purification (Mal. 3:3; cf. Matt. 13:30).

120. Am afraid. See on Ps. 19:9; Prov. 1:7.

121. Judgment and justice. In the matter of which David was accused his conscience was clear. He had endeavored to be just in his dealings with his fellow men. He had done the best he could, and confidently expected that the Lord would answer his prayer. He appealed to the great Judge to be delivered from the injustice of his oppressors.

122. Be surety. Compare Gen. 43:9.

123. Word of thy righteousness. The psalmist longed to hear the righteous judgment of God concerning him. His enemies had maligned his character and tried to bring disrepute upon him, but he knew that God would speak justly concerning him.

125. Thy servant. The psalmist delighted to call himself the "servant" of God (see Ps. 19:11, 13; 27:9; 69:17; etc.).

126. To work. The wicked have gone to such depths in disobedience that David feels the Lord should interpose and bring swift judgment upon them. However, God is long-suffering and slow to destroy anyone. He longs for all to repent and turn from their evil way (see Eze. 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9).

127. Above fine gold. The best of earthly possessions are not to be compared with the treasures of God's Word.

128. Every false way. A love for truth is accompanied by a hatred for falsehood. Truth and falsehood are mutually exclusive. The very fact that we love the truth causes us to hate error. "When we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, we shall have no relish for sin" (EGW RH March 18, 1890).

129. Wonderful. *pela'oth*, a term frequently employed of the revelation of God's power in miraculous deeds (see Ex. 15:11; Ps. 77:11, 14). The words of God and the acts of God are closely allied.

130. Simple. See on Ps. 19:7. Those in need of instruction, who sense their lack, are given discernment by a study of the Word (see on Prov. 1:4).

132. As thou usest to do. Literally, "according to judgment," possibly in the sense of "according to the right of." Those who love the name of God have a right to call upon Him. The Lord is pleased when we bring our petitions to Him and claim His promises.

134. Oppression. David knew from experience what oppression was. During his early life he had passed through many trials and difficulties. He prayed that he might be delivered from anything that would hinder his keeping God's precepts.

135. Face to shine. See on Num. 6:25. The man who is so blessed as to catch a glimpse of the radiance of God's countenance will be lifted above the gloom and sadness of earth (see 2 Cor. 3:18).

136. Rivers of waters. An Oriental hyperbole for profuse weeping. David's indignation (vs. 118, 119) because of the sins of the wicked has given place to pity and sympathy for them in their blindness.

138. Hast commanded. A divine authority has formed the testimonies, and they bear the impress of their Maker. It is not for man to question these royal commands. They are righteous and faithful, as is the Lord who proclaimed them.

139. My zeal hath consumed me. See on Ps. 69:9.

140. Very pure. Literally, "exceedingly refined." In the Word of God there is no mixture of error.

141. Small and despised. David was willing to place a low estimate upon himself. Great men are never great in their own estimation.

142. Truth. The law of God is not only true, but the truth itself; not only does it contain the truth, it is *the* truth. Those who are obedient to this law are walking in the truth, but those who disobey are living in error and falsehood.

143. My delights. The psalmist's joy was not dependent upon outward circumstances, but sprang from an inward peace, a peace derived from a study of the Word of God.

144. Everlasting. Men change their laws to conform to changing standards, but the law of God is unchangeable.

Give me understanding. Man can truly understand the purpose of his being only when he lives in harmony with the law of God (see John 7:17).

145. My whole heart. David's earnest prayer sprang from a longing that consumed his whole being (see 4T 534). Heart prayers reach heaven, whereas lip service is unavailing.

147. I prevented the dawning. That is, "I preceded the dawning." Before daybreak the psalmist directed his appeals to God for help (see Mark 1:35).

148. Prevent. Or, "precede" (see on v. 147). The night was commonly divided into three watches (Lam. 2:19; see on Judges 7:19; 1 Sam. 11:11). The psalmist likens himself to one listed for duty during these night watches. Before the time of his appointment he is awake and meditating upon God's Word.

149. According to. We should ask God to answer our prayers not according to our desires but in the light of His all-wise providence.

151. Near. An antithesis: the wicked draw near with their temptations (v. 150); God is also near, but to help.

153. Consider mine affliction. David was passing through severe trial and appealed his case to God for help. No child of God in affliction ever cries to the Lord in vain. God may not grant the desired deliverance, but He will provide courage and faith to endure the test (see 2 Cor. 12:7–9).

154. Plead my cause. The psalmist and his enemies are represented as on trial. David is asking God to be his advocate and to take his side in the controversy.

155. Far from the wicked. Every step the sinner takes along the path of evil removes him farther from God's saving grace. Unless he alters his course, he finally reaches the place where mercy no longer lingers (see 5T 119, 120).

156. Tender mercies. Or, "compassions."

158. Was grieved. Heb. *qut*, "to feel a loathing." As the psalmist watched the ways of the wicked he was repelled by their conduct.

160. From the beginning. Heb. *ro'sh*, literally, "head," here probably in the sense of "sum" as *ro'sh* is translated in Ps. 139:17.

161. Princes. See v. 23. The persons who should have sympathized with David were among his most bitter opponents. These royal leaders were appointed to avenge the oppressed and to protect the helpless. Instead of performing their duty, they spent their time persecuting the righteous.

162. Great spoil. Compare Isa. 9:3.

164. Seven times. The number seven signifies completeness. The praise offered to God by the psalmist did not depend upon his feelings or his circumstances. In trial, in sorrow, or in joy his voice was uplifted in thankful hymns of praise.

165. Great peace. Though there is turmoil and strife without, there is peace in the heart of him who loves the law of God.

Nothing shall offend them. Literally, "nothing is to them a stumbling block." Those who love the law have no occasion of stumbling. They walk with firm and steady step along the straight path of God's law and do not turn aside to the bypaths of sin.

166. I have hoped. David fixed his hope upon God. He looked to Him alone for salvation, and put forth earnest effort to obey the commandments.

168. Before thee. There is nothing hidden from God's sight (Heb. 4:13). How comforting the thought that when we are misunderstood by men, our ways are known to God!

170. Supplication. Heb. *techinnah*, "a supplication for favor."

171. Utter. Heb. *naba'*, "to bubble," or "pour forth." The psalmist desires that from his life and his lips will ever proceed songs of grateful praise.

172. Righteousness. Not only are the commandments right in themselves, they are the essence of righteousness. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just [literally, "righteous"], and good" (Rom. 7:12). This law is a transcript of the holy and righteous character of God. We should pattern our lives after its instruction.

173. Chosen. To man has been given freedom of choice (see Deut. 30:19). Happy are they who, like David, choose the precepts of God as their guide.

175. It shall praise thee. David is asking God for prolonged life, not to satisfy any selfish desire, but to spend his days in bearing witness to the love of God.

176. Lost sheep. Compare Isa. 53:6. When a sheep strays from the fold it seldom finds its way back without help. Like all the rest of us, the psalmist had wandered into forbidden paths, but the Lord sought him and brought him home again.

Seek thy servant. The good shepherd does not return from his search empty-handed. The way may be long and arduous, the path rough and thorny, but the shepherd perseveres and does not give up until he finds his lost sheep (Matt. 18:12–14; Luke 15:4–7).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 AH 311
1, 2 MH 463
1–3DA 89
1–6TM 120; 8T 323
9 CG 466; CT 54; DA 89; FE 102; MH 463; ML 85; MM 143; MYP 446; PP 460; 2T 409; 8T 323
11 CT 121; DA 89, 123; Ed 190; GC 600; GW 250; MH 181, 463; ML 85; PP 460; Te 107; 4T 616; 8T 323
14–16DA 89; ML 160
18 AH 401; CSW 39; CT 31, 172, 430; FE 183, 185, 238, 386; GC 600; MH 463; ML 291; MYP 260; RC 62; 4T 633; 5T 388; 8T 323
20 4T 534
24 Ed 291; MH 463; 2T 295; 5T 264, 507, 547; 8T 323
27 FE 133, 134
30 MH 463; 8T 323
30, 31 ML 73
32 3T 436, 476
35, 36 ML 79
40 GW 257; 4T 534
45 Ed 291; GC 466; MH 463; 8T 323
46 GC 207
48 Ed 252
54 MH 463; 8T 324
63 ML 216
64 MH 418
72 Ed 137; MH 463; 8T 323

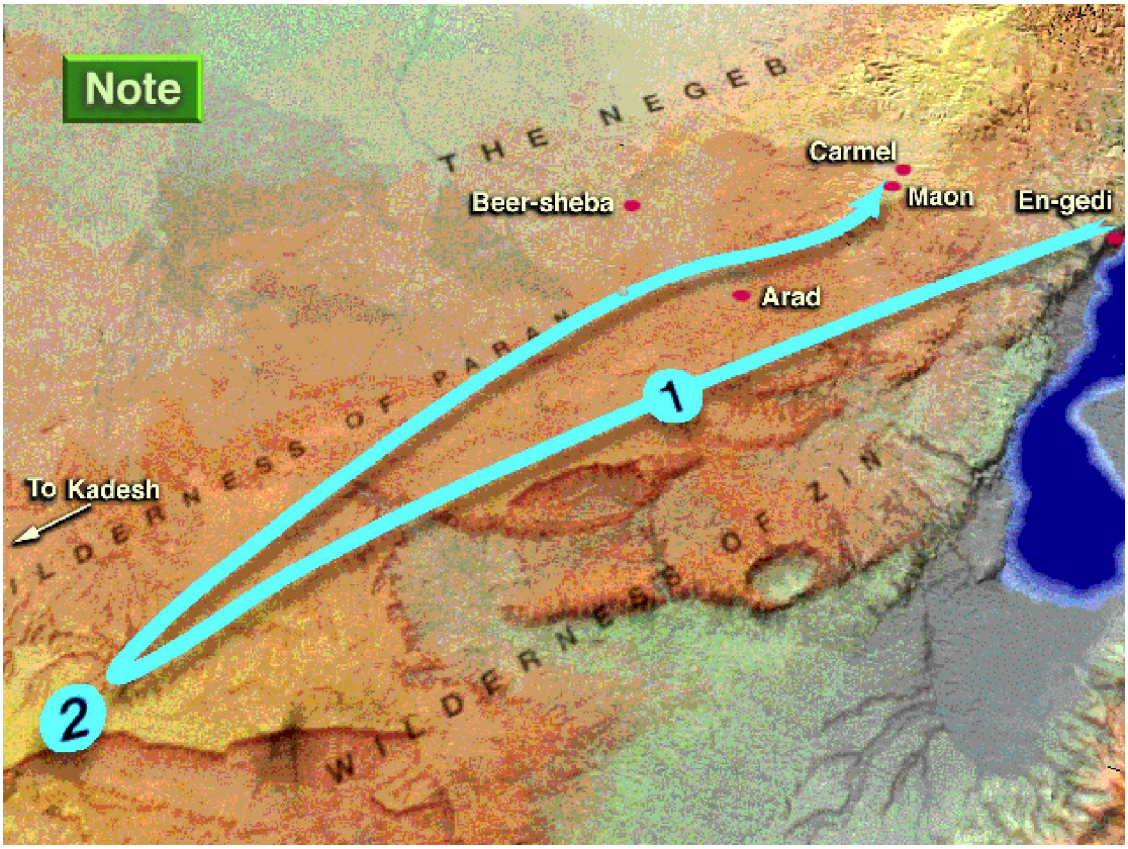
89 GC 434; MB 81; PP 342, 365
89–91MH 416
96 FE 238
97 GC 468; MH 463; SC 69; 4T 526
97–1048T 324
98 6T 416
98–100MH 464
99 GC 602
99, 100 DA 398
104 GC 602; MH 464; PP 596
104–112Ed 48
105 COL 406; CS 18; CSW 112; CT 422, 461; FE 103, 131, 307; GC 267; GW 250; ML 27; MYP 446; Te 193; 2T 396; 4T 27, 616; 5T 329, 507, 539
111 MH 464; 8T 324
121 AH 311
126 ChS 155; Ev 236; TM 373; 5T 136, 452; 9T 92
126–128TM 21
127 5T 136
129 MH 463
129, 130 8T 324
130 AA 284; CT 37, 425, 442; DA 163; Ev 464; FE 84, 129, 131, 133, 377, 390, 405, 459; GC 94, 195, 320; GW 78; ML 27; MH 458, 464; MM 124; MYP 65, 257; TM 94, 159, 257, 345; 4T 553; 5T 329, 686; 6T 433; 8T 324
140 MH 463; 8T 324
142 GC 467, 469
148 4T 526
152 MB 81
160 MH 464; 4T 336; 8T 324
165 DA 305; MH 464; ML 51, 150; MYP 98; TM 247
165–1678T 324
166, 167 MH 464
172 GC 467; MB 34; PP 596
174 GW 257; 4T 534
174, 175 8T 324
175 MH 464
176 COL 186

PSALM 120

God the Ever-wakeful Watchman

[21]

[21]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 105:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



When death claims esteemed friends and valued counselors, then it is that men realize anew that their trust must not be placed in princes, but in the ever-living, ever-watchful Lord. Though the voice of earlier advisers seemed indispensable and the watchful warnings invaluable, they cannot be compared with the promised guidance by One who never slumbers or sleeps. God is as desirous of manifesting His beneficient guidance today as He was in David's day. Psalm 121:2-8
[22]

INTRODUCTION.—According to PP 664 David composed Ps. 120 and 121 shortly after the death of Samuel. The removal of this godly man was a great personal loss to David. He recognized that now that Samuel's restraining influence had been removed. Saul would pursue him with greater fury than ever.

The slanderer (v. 2) is most probably Saul, though Doeg the Edomite (1 Sam. 22:22; see on 1 Sam. 26:19) has also been suggested.

There is considerable uncertainty regarding the meaning of the expression "a Song of degrees," perhaps better translated, "a Song of ascents," appearing in the superscription to this psalm and in the superscriptions to Ps. 121–134. The most probable explanation is that these psalms were employed as pilgrim psalms, sung as the children of Israel journeyed up to Jerusalem to the yearly festivals (see PP 538; see also pp. 625, 627).

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[22]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

1. He heard me. Literally, "he answered me." Not only does the Lord hear prayers; He answers them according to His infinite wisdom.

2. Deceitful tongue. See Introduction to Ps. 120. On the power of the tongue see James 3:5, 6. Consolation, when one is slandered, may be found in the words of Jesus (Matt. 5:10–12).

3. False tongue. Slander embitters and degrades the soul of the one who speaks evil of his neighbor, and brings misunderstanding and contention into society.

4. Sharp arrows. Verse 4 is the answer to the question raised in v. 3. Evidently these sharp arrows represent the retribution the Lord brings upon the slanderer.

Juniper. Heb. *rethamim*, believed to represent a plant called broom, a treelike shrub with many twigs but with few leaves (see on Job 30:4). From this broom the Arabs today manufacture charcoal of good quality which makes an intensely hot fire.

5. Mesech. Rather, "Meshech" (see on Gen. 10:2).

Kedar. See on Gen. 25:13. Meshech and Kedar are evidently used figuratively of the lands of David's exile.

6. That hateth peace. Perhaps a reference to King Saul (see Introduction to Ps. 120).

7. I am for peace. Literally, "I am peace." David's attempts to live peaceably with Saul and his evil advisers, were answered with hatred and hostility.

PSALM 121

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 121 is a beautiful song of trust and confidence in God. It is one of the most cherished of Bible poems in the entire heritage of Hebrew poetry. David composed Ps. 121 in the Wilderness of Paran, immediately after learning of the death of Samuel (PP 664). When David realized that his last influential earthly friend was gone, he turned to the Lord for his sole remaining help. The psalm has been a great blessing to countless thousands who at one time or another have found themselves in circumstances more or less similar to those in which the psalmist finds himself.

Ps. 121 was sung by pilgrims on the way to the yearly festivals at Jerusalem (see PP 538; see also the Introduction to Ps. 120).

1. Unto the hills. Many commentators take these hills to refer to the mountains of Jerusalem. Because of the presence of the sanctuary, Jerusalem was viewed as the dwelling place of God, and in this sense could be considered the source of divine help. Another interpretation makes these hills refer to the mountains of Palestine on whose heights the heathen set up their idolatrous shrines. On their journey to the festival, "as they saw around them the hills where the heathen had been wont to kindle their altar fires, the children of Israel sang: 'Shall I lift up mine eyes to the hills? Whence should my help come?'" (PP 538).

From whence. Rather, "from whence?" It is not from the hills or the mountains that God's children receive help, but from God (see Jer. 3:23).

2. From the Lord. The answer to the question in v. 1. God is able to meet any emergency that may arise in the vast universe of His creation.

3. Will not suffer. The Hebrew negative here employed, *'al*, used also in the expression "will not slumber," makes the verse an expression of a wish or a petition: "May he not suffer thy foot to be moved: may he that keepeth thee not slumber." These words were possibly sung by one band of pilgrims with another band responding in effect, "Nay there is no need for such a prayer, for He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers

nor sleeps; Israel's Watchman will not be caught off guard, like a human sentinel on a city wall." God's vigilance is unwearied. The Eternal is never exhausted and is always attentive to the needs of His earthly children.

5. Thy shade. A figure of protection strikingly forceful to one living in a country of glaring light and burning heat.

Right hand. The divine Protector is readily available (see Ps. 16:8).

6. Shall not smite. In the last days, when power will be given to the sun to scorch men with great heat (Rev. 16:8, 9), God's people will find comfort in this promise (GC 628–630).

7. Evil. Heb. *ra'*, designating both moral and physical evil.

8. Thy going out. The Lord continually watches over all the undertakings of His children.

"God keep thee safe from harm and sin,
Thy spirit keep; the Lord watch o'er
Thy going out, thy coming in
From this time, evermore."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 PP 538
2–8PP 664
3 5T 754
3, 4 PK 176
4 DA 65; MB 175; ML 10, 88; RC 70; 7T 17
5–7GC 629

PSALM 122

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 122 is another of the pilgrim psalms (see Introduction to Ps. 120). It is an expression of joy for the privilege of going up to Jerusalem to worship.

1. I was glad. The psalmist rejoiced at the opportunity of joining others for the journey to worship at Jerusalem. There is joy in worshiping in the society of kindred spirits.

2. Our feet shall stand. Or, "our feet were standing," as if stated in retrospect. The psalmist had undoubtedly been blessed by his past visits to the Holy City, and in the light of these he anticipated with holy joy another opportunity to worship there.

3. Compact. Heb. *chabar*, "to be united," "to be joined with"; the corresponding Hebrew noun, *chaber*, means "companion" or "fellow." Some see in this an allusion to the gathering of God's people for spiritual fellowship. The idea of fellowship is more definitely expressed in the LXX, which here may be translated, "Jerusalem is built as a city, whose fellowship [Gk. *metoche*] is together."

4. Testimony. In the sense of an institution ordained by God (see Deut. 16:16; cf. Ps. 81:3–5; see on Ps. 19:7). The clause reads literally, "a testimony for Israel, to give thanks to the name of *Yahweh*." The words "unto the" before "testimony" have been supplied.

5. Thrones of judgment. Jerusalem, as the seat of government, was the center of justice for the entire nation. Had Israel's kings ruled as God designed, their governments would have promoted and conserved mercy, righteousness, peace, joy, love. These are the qualities that come from the divine throne.

6. Jerusalem. The very name implied that the city should be a place of peace.

7. Peace. Compare 1 Sam. 25:6; Luke 10:5; John 20:19.

8. For my brethren. It was to the obvious advantage of all Israel that there should be peace in Jerusalem. Verses 8, 9 lay down two great principles that should actuate every Christian: (1) love for the brethren, (2) love for the church. Those who love God will love the brethren of whom God's church is composed.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–6PP 538
2 DA 76, 448; PP 412
7 DA 76; PP 539

PSALM 123

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 123 is an earnest appeal to God for help in time of distress. The change from the singular to the plural (see vs. 1, 2) places the appeal on a national basis.

On the superscription see Introduction to Ps. 120; also pp. 625, 627.

1. Lift I up. The eye of faith and hope must always be uplifted to God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe.

2. Servants. As the servants in a household look to the master for support, so Christians are dependent upon God for physical help and spiritual sustenance. When the servant receives wrong or injury, he looks to his master for protection. So the believing child should look to the hand of the Lord to deliver him (see 1 Cor. 4:3, 4).

Look unto the hand. Compare Ps. 145:15, where the psalmist pictures all the creatures of God's hand as looking to Him for their daily needs.

3. Exceedingly filled. There are insufficient data to determine to what crisis in Israel's national history the psalmist is alluding.

4. At ease. Compare Eze. 16:49; Amos 6:1; Zech. 1:15. Freedom from affliction and a life of comfortable ease are not the soil in which character develops. The Lord permits affliction to come upon His people to wean them away from a life of ease and make them long for their heavenly home. We should thank God for the hand of affliction that lays the pride of man in the dust.

PSALM 124

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 124 is a hymn of thanksgiving to God for His mighty deliverance in time of national crisis. The precise occasion is not identified. Surrounding enemies were a constant threat to Israel. Many times it seemed that the chosen people would be annihilated. However, the Lord provided a way of escape.

On the superscription see Introduction to Ps. 120; also pp. 616, 625, 627.

1. Been the Lord. An appropriate acknowledgment of the source of the deliverance. Too often the source of blessing is forgotten once the petition is realized and the crisis past (see Luke 17:12–17). A striking announcement. God had been Israel's ally. With God on the side of Israel, the people need fear no foe.

3. Swallowed us up. The wicked reflect the spirit of the great destroyer, Satan himself (see John 8:44).

5. Proud waters. As the swollen flood—waters sweep everything before them, and seem disdainful of opposing objects, so the wicked would engulf the righteous and bring about their destruction if God did not restrain them (see GC 614).

6. A prey. The metaphor changes. The adversaries of Israel are likened to wild beasts ready to devour their prey, but held in check by God.

7. Snare is broken. Israel is likened to a frightened, defenseless bird caught in a trap, but suddenly freed by the breaking of the snare.

8. Heaven and earth. As long as these two great monuments of God's mighty creative power exist, God's children need not fear what puny man can do to them. He who made heaven and earth is infinite in resources; all the forces of the universe are within His view, and obedient to His will.

PSALM 125

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 125 develops the theme that the righteous can be assured of the Lord's guardianship over them continually. As Jerusalem is secure by its geographical location, so those who trust in God will be secure from the machinations of the wicked. They are safe from all the fiery darts of the enemy.

On the superscription see Introduction to Ps. 120; also pp. 625, 627.

1. Mount Zion. See on Ps. 48:2.

2. Round about Jerusalem. Jerusalem was uniquely situated on a mountain ridge (see on Ps. 48:2), separated from the surrounding hills by the Kidron Valley to the east, the Valley of Hinnom to the south, and the ancient city by the Tyropoeon Valley to the west. The surrounding hills were generally higher. The Mt. of Olives, for example, reaches an altitude of about 2,723 ft. at its highest point as compared with an altitude of about 2,470 ft. for the highest point of the ancient city.

Round about his people. As this girdle of mountains encircles the city, so the ever-widening circle of God's love surrounds His people. That circle keeps them within His fold, and also keeps those who would do harm from entering in.

3. Rod of the wicked. The heathen scepter. The righteous will not continue to be dominated by the wicked, lest prolonged oppression and continual association with evil men lead Israel to adopt some of their evil ways.

5. Peace. In contrast with the confusion and unrest in which the wicked find themselves, the righteous experience peace (see Ps. 122:6–8).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 PP 538
1–3AA 86

PSALM 126

INTRODUCTION.—Many commentators believe Ps. 126 celebrates the return from Babylonian captivity (see Ezra 1). Others think that the expression "turned again the captivity" is not in itself sufficient to fix upon any specific crisis, inasmuch as the words may metaphorically describe a general return of prosperity. The argument is not conclusive. Whatever the captivity, release from it brought exuberant joy. The experience seemed almost too good to be true. The second part of the psalm (vs. 4–6) seems to introduce a note of sadness. It would appear that either the people had again become entangled and were requesting their freedom once more, or were asking, after a return to their land, for full restoration to their former status.

On the superscription see Introduction to Ps. 120; also pp. 625, 627.

1. Turned again. See Introduction to Ps. 126.

2. Among the heathen. Or, "among the nations." The nations surrounding Israel were constantly reminded of God's miracle-working power on behalf of His chosen people. God designed that such demonstrations of power should be the means of acquainting the

heathen with the true God, "that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him" (Acts 17:27).

4. Turn. See Introduction to Ps. 126.

South. Heb. *Negeb*, the southern part of Palestine, an arid desert most of the year; but whenever rain comes, and the brooks begin to flow, new life comes to the countryside. So, the psalmist prays, may God send new life and vitality to His people.

5. Sow in tears. Tears of anxiety and uncertainty, the heart wondering, as the seed is cast into the ground, whether there will be a harvest.

Joy. Heb. *rinnah*, frequently "a shout of joy." *Rinnah* appears also in v. 2 and is there translated, "singing." When the harvesttime comes, tears give place to ringing songs of joy, because the Lord has blessed the fruit of the soil.

6. He that goeth forth. The gospel worker may find comfort in this text as he scatters the good seed of the gospel, not knowing what success will accompany his efforts (see COL 65). If he continues faithfully sowing, he can be assured that in due season he will be able to present his sheaves at the feet of the Master and hear the blessed benediction, "Well done" (Matt. 25:21, 23). Tears of anxious labor will give place to the songs of joy. Gladness will take the place of sadness, "and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–3PK 559
3 2T 234
5 MYP 98; 5T 134; 6T 420
5, 6 Ev 63; EW 64
6 COL 65; Ed 105; FE 264; GW 187; TM 175; 2T 120; 3T 234, 481; 5T 395; 6T 305; 7T 23

PSALM 127

INTRODUCTION.—"Man proposes but God disposes" may be considered to be the theme of the first stanza of Ps. 127. Man's work of building is vain unless blessed by God. The second stanza extols the joy of fatherhood. At first reading these topics may appear to be independent. They were, however, closely related in the mind of the Hebrews.

On the superscription see Introduction to Ps. 120; also pp. 617, 625, 627. The phrase "for Solomon" may also be rendered "of Solomon."

1. Except the Lord. This verse shows the futility of attempting any enterprise unless the Lord's blessing be upon our plans.

Labour. Heb. *'amal*, emphasizing toil involving weariness and trouble.

2. Giveth his beloved sleep. Those addressed in this verse are the anxious toilers, those who do not get joy out of life because of their constant anxiety. Early and late they work and are so concerned about material things that they do not enjoy restful slumber. This is not so with those who rest in calm dependence upon God. This text, however, is no sanction for idleness, but is a rebuke to those who fret and worry instead of trusting in God.

4. As arrows. A figure denoting both protection and conquest.

Children of the youth. That is, children of young parents.

5. In the gate. The open space at the gate of the city was the place where questions under dispute were settled (see Gen. 19:1; Isa. 29:21; Amos 5:12). These sons were not ashamed to plead their father's cause. They stood ready to defend him against any false charges. A large family has its cares, but it has also its rewards.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 CW 97; GW 435; 6T 108
2 1T 205
3 AH 159, 280, 471; COL 195; CT 143; FE 416

PSALM 128

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 128 is an idyllic picture of family piety and felicity..

On the superscription see Introduction to Ps. 120; also pp. 625, 627.

1. Blessed. See on Ps. 1:1.

That feareth. The fear of God is the foundation of all true happiness. This is not the shuddering fear that comes from conscious guilt, but the fear that arises from an ardent love and profound reverence for God.

2. Labour of thine hands. The industry of the good man is blessed and the diligent toiler enjoys a recompense for his labor. The Scriptures give no sanction to indolence but everywhere uphold the dignity of labor. Man's life of toil and care was appointed in love (see PP 60), as a protection to him in his fallen state (see on Gen. 3:17–19).

3. Fruitful vine. The fruitfulness, gracefulness, and dependence for support of the vine is a fitting symbol of the loyal wife and mother in the home.

Olive plants. The Hebrews considered the vine and the olive among earth's choicest fruits. So a noble wife and dutiful children are the greatest gifts that a man can possess on this earth.

4. Blessed. Not only is the good man blessed himself; he is a blessing to all around him.

5. The good of Jerusalem. As the Hebrews kept continually before them the prosperity of Jerusalem, so the Christian will constantly work for the upbuilding of God's church on earth.

6. Children's children. The man who fears the Lord will live to a ripe old age and see his family perpetuated.

Peace upon Israel. It is preferable to take these words as a parting benediction, "Peace be upon Israel."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 CS 155
1, 2 4T 495

PSALM 129

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 129 is a song celebrating national deliverance. The psalmist speaks of the trials through which Israel as a nation had passed and of how the Lord interposed on their behalf and brought confusion to their enemies. It is a song of the countryside and has many allusions to agricultural pursuits. The precise historical incident that may have been the occasion of this psalm is a matter of conjecture. The psalmist is not so much concerned with the incident as with the lesson to be drawn from it.

On the superscription see Introduction to Ps. 120; see also pp. 625, 627.

1. Many. Or, "in abundant measure," that is, "often."

From my youth. See Jer. 2:2; Hosea 2:3, 15; 11:1. Israel had spent her "youth" in cruel bondage in Egypt and now looks back to the Lord's deliverance from that dark land.

2. Not prevailed. He who puts his trust in the Lord, though often in distress, need never be defeated (see 2 Cor. 4:8–10). In Christ he is always victorious.

3. Plowed upon my back. A picture of the backs of the Israelites being lacerated by the cruel lashes of their oppressors. The scourges turned the flesh as the plow turns the furrows of the field.

6. As the grass. The wind, or perchance some bird, carries a seed, and as it falls upon the flat roof of the Oriental house it springs up very quickly, but having no depth of earth, it soon withers, and thus yields no harvest (Matt. 13:5). So it is with those who scheme against Israel. Their plans at first give the appearance of success, but they do not fructify.

7. Filleth not. There will be no sheaves and thus no grain.

8. Upon you. Compare Ruth 2:4. There was nothing comparable to this kind of greeting with reference to the enemies of Zion.

PSALM 130

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 130 is the confession of a sinner who in despair cries unto the Lord for forgiveness. He recognizes that if the Lord should deal with him according to his sin, his case would be hopeless. The Lord reveals Himself to this sinner as a pardoning God.

On the superscription see Introduction to Ps. 120; see also pp. 625, 627.

1. Out of the depths. Latin, *de profundis*; hence the psalm has been named the *De profundis Psalm*. The psalmist was in deep distress, but he recognized that the Lord delights to answer prayer under such circumstances.

3. Shouldest mark. Literally, "shouldest observe," "shouldest watch." In order to stand in the great day of scrutiny, we must rely wholly upon God's pardoning mercy and forgiving love and plead the righteousness of Christ.

4. Forgiveness. God delights in forgiving the penitent sinner. His nature is merciful and forgiving. But there are prerequisites to forgiveness (see on Ps. 32:1).

5. I wait. The answer may not come as quickly as the psalmist would like, but because of his confidence in that word he waits patiently in hope. Even though the night of sorrow may seem long, he knows that the morning will soon break. When the dark, black clouds of night roll away, the bright beams of "the Sun of righteousness" will be seen (see Mal. 4:2).

7. Let Israel hope. The psalmist asked his people to join with him in this blessed hope.

Mercy. Heb. *chesed*, "divine love" (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

Plenteous redemption. There is unlimited power with God, and He is able and willing, yes, He delights in doing for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

8. He. Emphatic in the Hebrew. There is salvation in no other (Matt. 1:21; Acts 4:12). The psalmist has come out of the depths of a crushing sense of sin and is now standing upon the mountaintop of redemption and forgiveness.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3–8TM 15

6 TM 445

7 COL 245

PSALM 131

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 131 is a song expressing childlike trust and humble resignation. The psalmist had cultivated the art of self-discipline to the place where he no longer strove for the highest place.

On the superscription see Introduction to Ps. 120; see also pp. 616, 625, 627.

1. Not haughty. In the school of experience the psalmist had to renounce pride and selfishness and to develop a meek and lowly spirit. The great men in God's sight are men of deep humility. Christ stated that among those born of women there had not arisen a greater than John the Baptist (Matt. 11:11), and yet he was one of the humblest of men. John reached the height of self-abnegation (see John 3:30). "Nearest the throne itself shall be, the footstool of humility" (see Jer. 45:5). None but the sincerely humble are truly great.

2. Weaned child. The psalmist had been weaned away from worldly ambitions and desires, and now enjoyed security and contentment in God.

3. Let Israel hope. The tone of personal experience changes to a request for all Israel. Having been weaned from his own selfish desires, the psalmist was able to utter a prayer for his people Israel. He was living for the Lord and encouraging all his friends and countrymen to follow his example. Personal victory became a pattern for all Israel to follow.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 TM 15

PSALM 132

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 132 is a song commemorating David's desire to build a house of worship and the Lord's gracious promises to the shepherd king (see 2 Sam. 7:1–13; 1T 203).

On the superscription see Introduction to Ps. 120; see also pp. 625, 627.

1. All his afflictions. See 1 Chron. 22:14. Some of the trials David endured were of his own making, others came upon him from without.

2. Sware. See 2 Sam. 7:1–13. The historical account does not mention the oath.

3. I will not come. David resolved to make the building of a house for the Lord the item of pre-eminent importance in his affairs.

4. Not give sleep. An Oriental figure (see Prov. 6:4). The psalmist could not enjoy rest till he had prepared a resting place for the ark of God. He was so in earnest about God's work that everything else took second place.

6. We heard of it. An abrupt transition of thought to the unhoused ark.

Ephratah. The meaning of this poetical passage is obscure. Some see in "Ephratah" a reference to Bethlehem, since Ephratah was the ancient name of that city (see on Gen. 35:19). Others see a reference to Kirjath-jearim (1 Chron. 2:24, 50), where the ark was for 20 years (1 Sam. 7:2).

Wood. Heb. *ya'ar*, which should probably be rendered as a proper name, Jaar (see RSV), which, in turn, is probably a shortened form of Kirjath-jearim, Heb. *Qiryath Ye'arim*.

8. Arise. A prayer that the Lord will occupy the resting place Israel provided for Him (see 2 Chron. 6:41, 42).

9. With righteousness. Purity and holiness are required of those who minister in sacred offices (see Job 29:14; Rev. 19:8).

Saints. Heb. *chasidim* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

10. Thine anointed. This prayer might appropriately have been offered as each successor in the line of David mounted the throne and entered upon his sacred office.

11. Lord hath sworn. See 2 Sam. 7:12.

12. If. The promises to David were conditional on obedience (see 1 Kings 8:25; cf. 2 Sam. 7:14; see on 2 Sam. 7:12–16).

14. My rest. Better, "my resting place." "Had Israel as a nation preserved her allegiance to Heaven, Jerusalem would have stood forever, the elect of God" (GC 19; see DA 577).

15. Her provision. Temporal prosperity would have been the lot of Israel if she had followed the divine plan (see Deut. 18:1–14).

16. Clothe her priests. A response to the prayer of v. 9. Israel tragically failed in her mission. Instead of being clothed with salvation her priests became profaners of true worship (Eze. 22:26).

Saints. Heb. *chasidim* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

17. To bud. Heb. *samach*, "to sprout," or "to spring up." The noun *semach*, "branch," "twig," or "sprout," is used as a title of the Messiah (see Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12).

A lamp. Compare 1 Kings 15:4.

For mine anointed. That is, for the king, here a reference to David. The word "anointed" is from the Heb. *mashiach*, literally, "messiah," from the root *mashach*, "to anoint."

18. Crown. Heb. *nezer*, "a consecration [to an office]," also "a diadem [or sign of consecration]." It can be appropriately applied to a king's crown or to a high priest's diadem (see Ex. 29:6). The LXX reads "my holiness" in place of "his crown."

Flourish. Heb. *ṣuṣ*, "to blossom." *Ṣuṣ* is here used in the sense "to shine," "to sparkle," or "to glitter." The corresponding noun *ṣiṣ*, "a blossom" or "a front ornament," is used in referring to the glittering plate of gold bearing the inscription "Holiness to the Lord," which the high priest wore on his miter (see Ex. 28:36, 37).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

11 1T 203
13 GC 19
14 PP 732

PSALM 133

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 133 is a short but beautiful poem extolling the blessedness of brotherly unity. Such unity characterized the meetings of the Israelites at the great festivals of Jerusalem. Harmony and brotherly love prevailed on these occasions.

On the superscription see Introduction to Ps. 120; see also pp. 616, 625, 627.

1. Brethren. The term denotes a tie of intimate relationship. David sang Ps. 133 when his relatives and friends were in hiding in the cave of Adullam (see PP 658).

2. Ointment. Heb. *shemen*, "oil," here evidently not common oil, but the sacred oil with which the high priest was anointed (Ex. 29:7; 30:23–33). It had a sweet perfume; it was holy; it was diffusive. When it was poured upon Aaron's head, it dropped upon his garments. So it is with brotherly love. It blesses all with its sweet and holy influence.

3. Dew of Hermon. A symbol of refreshment. Brotherly love born of heaven refreshes and revives. It is a foretaste of the fellowship enjoyed in the heavenly home. Because of the sympathy and affection which his associates showed him, David could sing this psalm while he was in the cave of Adullam (PP 658).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 AH 179; ML 276; PP 658

PSALM 134

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 134 consists of an appeal to the night attendants in the sanctuary to worship Jehovah (vs. 1, 2) and a response (v. 3).

This short psalm is the last of the Songs of Ascents (see Introduction to Ps. 120; see also pp. 625, 627).

1. Bless ye the Lord. See on Ps. 63:4.

By night stand. The Levites were employed in their sacred work by night as well as by day (see 1 Chron. 9:33).

2. Lift up your hands. A gesture of blessing (see Lev. 9:22), as well as an attitude in prayer (see Ps. 141:2).

3. That made. The special mark of distinction between the true God and false gods (see on Ps. 115:15).

Thee. Each one individually as well as the congregation as a whole.

Out of Zion. The benediction from the Creator of the universe is represented as coming from the city of the Great King.

PSALM 135

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 135 is an appeal to praise the Lord, because of what He has done for His people and because of what He is to His people. The first section (vs. 1–14) contains an exhortation to praise the Lord for His goodness. This is followed by a denunciation of idols and a further exhortation to bless the name of God (vs. 15–21).

1. Praise. See Ps. 113:1; see on Ps. 104:35.

2. Ye that stand. A call especially to priests and ministers (see on vs. 19, 20).

3. Pleasant. Referring either to the singing of praises to God's name or to the name itself (see Ps. 147:1).

4. Peculiar treasure. Heb. *segullah*, "personal property" (see Deut. 7:6, 7; 14:2; cf. 1 Peter 2:9).

5. Above all gods. Other gods had no real existence (see vs. 15–18).

6. Whatsoever. See Ps. 115:3. God's pleasure is carried out in all the domains of His vast universe.

8. Smote the firstborn. The plagues of Egypt were a mighty manifestation of God's sovereignty. The tenth plague was especially severe and hence especially impressive (see on Ex. 12:29).

11. Sihon. Sihon and Og attempted to intercept the progress of the Israelites to the land of Palestine (Num. 21:21–35; Deut. 2:30–37; 3:1–13).

12. Heritage. The territories of Sihon and Og were occupied by the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh (Num. 32:33).

13. Memorial. Heb. *zeker*, "mention." The memory of men is forgotten, but God's name will be "mentioned" to all eternity.

14. Judge his people. See on Deut. 32:36.

Will repent himself. Heb. *nacham*. In the form here employed *nacham* means "to be sorry for."

15. Silver. For vs. 15–18, see on Ps. 115:4–8.

19. Bless. See on Ps. 63:4.

House of Aaron. The priests (see Ex. 29:9). Those holding high spiritual office should be foremost in blessing the Lord.

20. House of Levi. When Israel fell into idolatry and Moses made a call for those who were on the Lord's side, all the sons of Levi responded (see on Ex. 32:26), and they were set aside for holy service (see on Num. 18:6).

21. Out of Zion. See on Ps. 134:3.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2–5TM 15

4 1T 282

6 MH 416

PSALM 136

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 136 has been known among the Jews as the Great Hallel. The recurring refrain "for his mercy endureth for ever" was doubtless sung as a response, either by the worshipers or by a Temple choir.

1. O give thanks. There is no time when it is inappropriate to render thanks to God for His goodness and mercy to man.

His mercy endureth for ever. Literally, "for to eternity his love." The word translated "mercy" is *chesed*, which means, "divine love" (see Additional Note on Ps. 36). The refrain is repeated in every verse of this song.

2. The God of gods. Compare Deut. 10:17; 1 Cor. 8:5, 6.

3. Lord. Heb. *'Adon* (see Vol. pp. 171–173).

4. Great wonders. God is the unrivaled miracle worker. Only a Being of infinite intelligence could have designed the universe with its indescribable wonders.

5. By wisdom. What wisdom lies hidden in the secrets of the universe God has made! Scientific discoveries continually reveal more and more of the marvels of His creation. Design is seen in every department of nature.

6. Above the waters. See Gen. 1:9, 10.

7. Great lights. A reference to the wonders of the fourth day of creation week, as recorded in Gen. 1:14–19.

9. Moon and stars. No hour of the day is left without rule. When we look up to the sky at night and see the lamps of heaven, we are reminded of God's great love to us. The moon gladdens the heart, and the twinkling stars seem to speak messages of comfort.

11. Brought out Israel. Pharaoh and his slave masters were determined not to let the children of Israel go from their servitude in Egypt. However, when the Lord plans and promises to release His people and His people cooperate, there is no power in earth or

hell that can withstand Him. When the proud monarch defies Him and refuses to cooperate he does so to his own destruction.

13. Divided the Red sea. See Ex. 14. As the Lord made a road through the Red Sea so that the Israelites walked on dry ground, so will He open up before us a way through the waters of adversity that are surging before us, and which seem impassable to our faithless eye.

16. Led his people. Throughout the wilderness journeyings the Lord was the Provider and Leader of His people. He guided Israel by the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day (Ex. 13:21). He provided them with water and sent them food from heaven to them (see Ex. 16, 17).

19. Sihon. See on Ps. 135:11.

21. Heritage. The land of Canaan was given to Israel by a grant from God. He had promised to Abraham that his seed would inherit this country (Gen. 15:18).

23. Low estate. Israel was brought unto a low estate of bondage and slavery in Egypt, but the Lord did not forget them in their distress. To all who have fallen low in sorrow, in sickness, or in sin, how comforting it is to know that the Lord does not forget, but sends help and deliverance.

25. Giveth food. God sustains all His living creatures (see Ps. 104:27).

PSALM 137

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 137 has been fittingly termed the Song of the Captive. It portrays the Israelites in the land of exile. Their minstrels are silent, while their captors taunt them, asking them to tune their harps and sing one of the songs of Zion. The captives' hearts are heavy. The plaintive note in this psalm is one that never fails to draw out the sympathy of the reader for the distressed and disheartened captives.

1. Rivers of Babylon. Babylon was known as the land of "many waters" (Jer. 51:13). The most important watercourse was the Euphrates, which has many tributaries. The captives had resorted to the banks of these streams.

We wept. The remembrance of the Holy City and especially of their Temple now in ruins made their hearts so sorrowful that they found it impossible to restrain their tears. To them there was no land like Canaan. It was a goodly land (Deut. 8:7–9). It held many precious memories for them.

2. Hanged our harps. The music of the lyre (see p. 34) had been sweet and delightful to them, but now that calamity had overtaken them, their harps were silent.

3. Required of us a song. For an Assyrian pictorial representation of this verse see Fig. 9, p. 35, together with comments made there.

Songs of Zion. Their masters were deriding them and asking them to sing one of their sacred melodies.

5. If I forget. To have consented to sing a song of the Temple under these conditions would have seemed to the Israelite like being unfaithful to his beloved city, which he adored with all his heart. Sooner would he forget his most treasured possession than forget Zion, the pride and glory of Israel.

6. Tongue cleave. That is, lose the ability to speak.

7. The children of Edom. Edom manifested an unbrotherly spirit toward Israel on several occasions. Despite their kinship with the descendants of Jacob, the Edomites helped the Babylonians against the Israelites (Obadiah 10–14. Edom is repeatedly

denounced by the prophets for its heartless treatment of a brother nation (Jer. 49:7; Lam. 4:21; Eze. 25:12–14; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11).

9. Against the stones. The murder of innocent children, though customary in ancient warfare, was one of the cruelest and most abhorrent of all practices (2 Kings 8:12; Isa. 13:16; Hosea 10:14). In view of the fact that such stern treatment had been meted out by the Babylonians (see Jer. 51:24), the psalmist is simply enunciating a law of life—"as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee" (Obadiah 15; cf. Matt. 7:2).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 DA 28

PSALM 138

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 138 is a psalm of gratitude. The psalmist exhibits courage, fortitude, and fidelity and pledges to acknowledge his Lord before all the gods of the heathen or before kings and rulers in authority.

On the superscription see p. 616.

1. Gods. Heb. *'elohim*, here probably the heathen gods. The psalmist does not think these heathen gods have any real existence; he refers to them only as they existed in the thoughts of their worshipers. The LXX renders *'elohim* by "angels," as in Ps. 8:5 (see comments there; see also Vol. I, p. 171).

2. Above all thy name. The LXX renders the clause, "for thou hast magnified thy holy name above every thing." This reading avoids the obvious difficulty of considering God's word above God's name, inasmuch as "name" often stands for "person" or "character" (see on Ps. 7:17). However, here "name" may be thought of in the sense of reputation. Jehovah's name, or reputation, had been greatly dishonored because of the sins of Israel. The fulfillment of the word, or promise, of God would tend to restore confidence in the good name of Israel's God.

4. Praise thee. When the kings of earth hear what God does for His people, they also will join in praise. The psalmist enters upon his mission to tell others of God's goodness with full assurance of realizing his objective.

5. They shall sing. When once a man knows and obeys the ways of God he has every reason for singing.

6. Lowly. Although God is exalted high above heaven, He stoops low to touch the humble of earth. He looks graciously upon the poor in spirit and has promised to dwell with them (Isa. 57:15). "Lowliness of heart is the strength that gives victory to the followers of Christ; it is the token of their connection with the courts above" (DA 301).

Proud. Self-conceit is an insuperable barrier between man and God. Pride was the sin that led to Lucifer's fall (Isa. 14:13, 14).

8. The Lord will perfect. Compare Phil. 1:6.

Thine own hands. The psalmist appeals to God as his Creator. When we thus recognize God we have a basis for trusting Him to supply our needs.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

6 DA 301; FE 371

PSALM 139

INTRODUCTION.—The theme of Ps. 139 is God's omniscience and omnipresence. The psalmist recognizes God as present everywhere, One who is not only all-powerful, but also all-knowing, One who has formed man from the womb, and One whose presence

man cannot escape. The language of this psalm resembles closely that of the book of Job. The rhythmical structure is regular. There are four strophes, each consisting of six verses. The first section (vs. 1–6) dwells upon the omniscience of God; the second (vs. 7–12), on His omnipresence. The third (vs. 13–18) gives the reason for the profound conviction of these truths of which the poet's heart is full. In the last strophe (vs. 19–24) the psalmist changes his theme and expresses his dislike for wicked men. He then closes with a prayer that his own heart may be right with God, and that he may be led by Him in the way everlasting.

On the authorship of the psalm see 2T 536; 6T 375; on the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Searched. The Lord searches the heart of all (Jer. 17:10), and alone knows what is in it. Man is often ignorant of his true condition.

4. Not a word. The Hebrew of this clause may be understood as implying that before the thought has been formed into words, the Lord knows it. Everything is open and transparent before God.

5. Beset me. The Lord encircles us on every side, to that there is no possibility of escaping from His presence.

6. Too wonderful. God's knowledge is beyond the grasp of the finite mind.

7. From thy spirit. The psalmist does not imply in his question that he desires to escape from the Spirit of God, but rather that there is no place in the vast universe where the Spirit's presence is not felt.

8. Heaven. Compare Amos 9:2.

Hell. Heb. *she'ol* (see on Prov. 15:11).

9. Wings of the morning. Compare Ps. 18:10; Mal. 4:2). The dawn swiftly spreading over the sky is represented as having wings.

10. Hold me. God's powerful "right hand" accompanies His children in all their journeyings. The missionary in his faraway, lonely station may claim the comfort of this promise.

11. Shall be light. It is impossible to hide from God in the darkness. Those who think they can carry on their nefarious work at night without the all-seeing eye of God beholding them are mistaken. Night may conceal from men, but not from God.

13. Hast possessed. Heb. *qanah*, here thought to mean "create," as probably also in Gen. 14:19, 22; Ex. 15:16; Deut. 32:6.

Reins. Literally, "kidneys," here probably used for the internal organs in general.

Hast covered. Heb. *sakak*, which according to some authorities means "to knit together," "to weave," "to plait"; according to others, "to keep hidden."

14. Wonderfully made. There is considerable uncertainty as to the exact translation of this verse. The LXX reads, "I will give thee thanks; for thou art fearfully wondrous." The other ancient versions support this reading. The Hebrew tends to support the translation of the KJV. According to this, the psalmist is extolling the wonders of the human frame (see Ed 201; 6T 375, 376). The great advance in medical knowledge since this was written has revealed hitherto unknown marvels in the human mechanism.

15. In secret. Like a great artist who does not exhibit his picture till it is complete, God does not lift the veil of human existence till the new life is perfect in symmetry and beautiful in form.

Curiously wrought. Literally, "woven."

Lowest parts of the earth. A figurative allusion to the womb.

16. Were written. As an architect draws out his plan and prepares his specifications for a new dwelling, so God plans what each individual will be, even before that soul is born into the world. It is for the individual to decide whether he will follow the divine blueprint or not.

19. Depart from me. A sudden transition. The psalmist turns his attention to the presence of evil in the world. To him sin was closely bound up with the sinner, so that his prayer for wickedness to cease was framed in words denunciatory of the sinner.

21. Am I not grieved? Literally, "do I not loathe?" (see on Ps. 119:158).

22. Perfect hatred. A reflection of a deep sense of righteous indignation against evil. Those who love God should be as wholehearted in their hatred of wickedness as they are in their love of goodness and truth.

23. Know my thoughts. Again the heart is laid open before the eye of a merciful God (see v. 1).

24. Lead me. Only God, who knows our inmost thoughts, can lead us safely. We all need an infallible Guide.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–3TM 439
1–6MH 433; 8T 282
2–6Ed 133
7–10Ed 132
12 GC 346
14 CD 17, 20; CG 104; CH 38, 41, 390, 504; Ed 201; ML 127; MM 80; Te 11, 213, 215; 1T 487; 2T 536; 3T 136; 6T 375; 8T 260
14, 15 CG 360; FE 426; 8T 264
16 MH 415
17, 18 LS 339
23, 24 SC 39; 5T 333

PSALM 140

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 140 is a prayer for deliverance from unscrupulous enemies.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. Evil man. That the psalmist has in mind not only a single individual but a class of wicked and "violent" men, is evident from the plurals in v. 2.

2. Imagine mischiefs. The enemies seem to be continually plotting and planning some new form of evil.

3. Adders' poison. The slanderous words of these wicked men (see James 3:8). Paul quotes from this verse to show the wickedness of the natural, unconverted man (Rom. 3:13).

4. My goings. Or, "my steps." The wicked are continually trying to defeat the purposes of the righteous, attempting to make the steps of the unsuspecting to slip and to cause their victims to fall by the way.

7. Covered my head. Divine protection is a better shield than any earthly helmet of brass or iron (see Eph. 6:13, 17).

8. Further not. The psalmist appealed to the Lord to keep the evil schemes of the wicked from succeeding.

9. Their own lips. See v. 3. The poison of slander is such that the slanderer suffers from his own words. Any expression of doubt or evil reacts on the speaker as well as on the hearer (see SC 124).

10. Let burning coals. A common sport among these wicked plotters was to scatter firebrands among their enemies. The psalmist desires that these evil men should have a portion of what they have meted out to the innocent.

12. I know. The psalmist is sure that the Lord is on the side of the righteous, and that those who are suffering for His sake are not unnoticed by Him.

13. Presence. Compare Ps. 16:11; 51:11.

PSALM 141

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 141 is a prayer for guidance and protection. The psalmist begins with an appeal for acceptance by the Lord (vs. 1, 2), begs that his speech may be kept pure (vs. 3, 4), expresses his desire to be censured by the righteous rather than to receive deceitful flattery from the ungodly (vs. 5, 6), and closes with a request that he may be rescued from the cruel schemes of his enemies (vs. 7–10).

On the authorship of the psalm see PP 667. On the superscription, see pp. 616, 627.

1. Make haste. God is pleased to have His children earnest in their petitions to the point of holy boldness.

2. As incense. The incense of the sanctuary was carefully prepared (see on Ex. 30:34), kindled with holy fire, and presented to God. It was offered morning and evening by the priests upon the altar of incense (see Ex. 30:7, 8). The incense represented "the merits and intercession of Christ, his perfect righteousness, … which can alone make the worship of sinful beings acceptable to God" (see PP 353).

Sacrifice. Heb. *minchah*, properly denoting the oblation, or meal offering, that accompanied the daily burnt offering (see Ex. 29:38–42; see on Lev. 2:1).

3. Set a watch. A figure drawn from the sentinels stationed at city gates at night. The importance of guarding the tongue is forcefully set forth by James (see James 3). Those who set a continual watch upon their lips are doing that which is pleasing to God (2T 54).

4. Incline not. The way that the heart inclines is the way that the life soon takes. The psalmist prayed earnestly that the Lord would keep him from the practices of evil men. We must not infer from the language of this verse that God ever inclines a man's heart to evil. Expressions such as these seem to have arisen from the concept that whatever happens to the life, God accomplishes, or at least allows (see on Ps. 44:9). The psalmist was simply using the nontechnical language of Bible writers, by which God is presented as doing that which He does not prevent. The familiar expression in the Lord's prayer, "lead us not into temptation" (Matt. 6:13), should be understood in the same light.

5. Let him reprove. The reproof of a friend will prove a blessing if accepted in the right spirit. He only who is willing to lay down his life for his brother, if need be, is properly equipped to offer reproof to an erring brother (see MB 184). Abigail proved herself to be a faithful friend by her tactful reproof of David's conduct (see PP 667).

Excellent oil. The Hebrew of the second part of v. 5 is obscure and no fully satisfactory meaning can be derived from it. Whether or not the LXX reflects the true original Hebrew cannot be known. It translates the second line of this stanza, "Let not the oil of the sinner anoint my head." The LXX, however, does remove the obscurity from the last line of the stanza by its reading, "For yet shall my prayer also be in their

pleasures." This reading may perhaps be understood as referring to a prayer not to be injured by these pleasures.

6. Stony places. Literally, "hands of a rock." The Hebrew of v. 6 is obscure (see on v. 5).

7. Our bones are scattered. The exact historical incident referred to is a matter of conjecture. The closing part of Saul's reign was filled with confusion (see PP 663, 664). David may have had in mind some of the incidents connected with this unsettled period.

Cleaveth wood. The word "wood" is supplied. The Hebrew seems rather to imply a cleaving of the earth itself. But the meaning of the text is obscure.

8. In thee is my trust. Literally, "in thee do I take refuge."

10. Their own nets. The guilty will reap the reward of their unjust deeds, whereas God will deliver the righteous from destruction.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 8T 178
3 ML 81; PK 348; 2T 54, 185; 4T 495, 521
3, 4 TM 418; 7T 259
5 PP 667

PSALM 142

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 142 is an earnest appeal to God for help in a time of overwhelming trouble.

According to the superscription this psalm was composed while David was hiding in a cave, but the cave is not identified. It may have been Adullam (1 Sam. 22) or En-gedi (1 Sam. 24), or even a cave not mentioned in the historical narrative. On the basis of Ps. 142:6 some think that of the two mentioned, En-gedi is the more likely.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 628.

1. I cried. See on Ps. 107:13.

2. Complaint. Heb. *sîach*, meaning also "concern." The psalmist had no complaint against God's dealings with him. He was complaining to God, not of God.

3. Thou knewest. When the psalmist poured out his complaint, it was not with the idea of informing God, but rather with the idea of sharing his troubles with his heavenly Friend.

4. Right hand. See on Ps. 121:5.

Would know me. It seemed that no one was willing to acknowledge his friendship for the psalmist because of the danger involved.

5. Portion. See on Ps. 119:57.

Our Refuge in Extremity

[23]

[23]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 120:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

There are times when the spirit is wrapped in perplexity and distraught by false accusations. Under the stress of emotion the intellectual powers of good judgement are often confused, and the soul knows not which way to turn. At such a time one can open the heart to God and place full confidence in His overruling providence. Then the life will be filled with the bounties of the Lord, and the depression and consternation that formerly harassed the soul depart. Psalm 142:3

[24]

Historical background to 1 Samuel 24 if "the cave" of this Psalm is at En-gedi.

7. Compass. Heb. *kathar*. The form here found means “to congregate around a person.” Evidently those who were true followers of God were glad when the psalmist was delivered, and shared with him in thanksgiving.

Deal bountifully. Though the present may be difficult and the future foreboding, the psalmist looks forward with confidence to the time of his deliverance.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4 MH 172

PSALM 143

[24]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 143 is an appeal for deliverance and an expression of confidence in God's love and mercy. In tone and background Ps. 143 closely resembles Ps. 142.

The psalm consists of two equal divisions, separated by Selah. In each division the verses are arranged in pairs.

On the superscription see pp. 616, 627.

1. In thy righteousness. The psalmist appeals to God's essential goodness and justice, in which he has unquestioning confidence.

2. In thy sight. Although the Scriptures frequently call men "righteous" (see Gen. 18:23, 24; etc.), the psalmist recognizes that in the absolute sense, when compared with God, no man is righteous (see Job 9:2). Man can obtain the righteousness of Christ only through faith. Human effort can never make a man righteous (Eph. 2:8, 9). Works are the *fruit* of faith; they are not the *root* of faith. Faith comes first, and where there is true faith works are sure to follow.

4. My heart. The apparently hopeless situation in which the psalmist found himself numbed his heart. A feeling of terrible loneliness took possession of his soul.

5. I remember. Such remembrance can bring both sadness and hope. The psalmist was sad because the present was not like the past. As he remembered the former manifestations of God's power, his heart was encouraged in the hope that the Lord would again answer his prayer. He made bold to continue his request.

6. As a thirsty land. As the land during a long period of drought opens in yawning cracks, as if parting its lips in mute pleadings for water to quench its thirst, so the psalmist longed for the showers of heaven to water his soul.

Selah. See on p. 629.

7. Hear me speedily. See on Ps. 69:17.

My spirit faileth. See Ps. 84:2.

Hide not thy face. See Ps. 4:6; 13:1.

Pit. See on Ps. 28:1.

8. In the morning. See on Ps. 90:14. The psalmist hoped that the morning would end his grief. As the light of dawn dispels the darkness, so he asks that the light of God's presence shall banish the darkness from his soul. How fitting is the early morning for devotion, for meditation on the loving-kindness of the Lord!

Cause me to know. See on Ps. 25:4.

9. Deliver me. See on Ps. 59:1.

I flee unto thee to hide me. Literally, "unto thee I have hidden." God is a hiding place when the storms of life are raging and about to overwhelm (see Ps. 46:1).

11. For thy name's sake. See on Ps. 31:3. The psalmist falls back upon the holy name as a reason why the Lord should hear his request.

PSALM 144

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 144 is a song extolling God's strength and help both in war and in peace. The psalm closes on a note proclaiming the joy and happiness that come to those who have God for their Lord.

On the authorship of the psalm see CT 496. On the superscription see p. 616.

1. Strength. Heb. *ṣur*, "rock" (see on Ps. 18:2, 31, 46). *Ṣur* is used figuratively to denote something solid, enduring, and immovable.

My hands to war. See on Ps. 18:34. The psalmist is not glorifying war itself. David recognized that God gave him the skill to defeat the arrogant and mighty Goliath. In the conflict David did not trust to any human armor, but he went clothed in the panoply of heaven.

2. Goodness. Heb. *chesed* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

My fortress. See on Ps. 18:2.

High tower. See on 2 Sam. 22:3.

Shield. Heb. *magen*, translated "shield" in 2 Sam. 22:3 (see comments there).

3. What is man! See on Ps. 8:4.

4. Vanity. Heb. *hebel*, here probably meaning "a breath." How transitory is this life of ours! We scarcely have developed our physical and mental powers when we are taken by death.

6. Cast forth lightning. When heaven's artillery is set in motion how puny is the strength of man to resist it. At the second coming of Christ there will be more terrible manifestations of God's power than have yet been witnessed (see PP 109).

7. Great waters. The psalmist changes the figure. Great waters mean overwhelming dangers, and here no doubt refer to David's enemies, who were on every side.

8. Right hand. Perhaps meaning that their falsehood was right-handed, that is, they told lies with dexterity.

9. New song. The psalmist turns from the false to adore that which is true. Weary of earthly liars and deceivers, he turns to God with a new song—a fresh song of praise. His hand also would assist his tongue, for he would employ an instrument of ten strings as his accompaniment.

Psaltery. See p. 33.

Instrument of ten strings. See p. 36.

10. Unto kings. Kings are exposed to special danger, and David was no exception. God had preserved him in many battles, but above all this He had extended salvation to him as a guilty sinner.

11. Strange children. That is, foreign adversaries.

12. As plants. Verses 12–15 present a picture of a nation greatly blessed by God. The family, the fields, and the barns have all been abundantly prospered.

Corner stones. Heb. *zawiyyoth*, a word occurring only here and in Zech. 9:15, where it refers to the corners of the altar. Some of the Greek translations read "angles." The LXX has instead a participle, "adorned." Beauty of form without beauty of character is worthless (Prov. 31:30). Home is a palace when the sons are noble men and the daughters are like princesses. True education in childhood and youth is designed to develop this beauty of character in our children (see CT 496).

13. All manner of store. The land would be so blessed as to produce ample variety and abundant provision for all.

14. No breaking in. Or, "no breach," that is, in the town wall or cattle enclosures.

Going out. Either to war and captivity, or the escape of cattle from their enclosures.

15. Happy. Heb. *'ashre* (see on Ps. 1:1). There is no greater happiness than in knowing that we belong to God and He to us.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5, 6 PP 109
10 ML 291
12 AA 599; AH 234; CT 496; Ev 573, 635; FE 158, 513; MB 24; MH 376; ML 268; PK 36; Te 182; TM 17; 4T 48, 541; 6T 363; 7T 264; 9T 37
15 ML 161; PP 117

PSALM 145

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 145 is the first of the triumphant hymns. The psalms of this group are 145–150. They were evidently composed for liturgical use. The 145th is the only psalm that has in its title the Heb. *Tehillah*, "a praise," or, "a song of praise." The psalm is an acrostic (see p. 625). In Hebrew the initial letters of the verses follow the Hebrew alphabet in order, with one exception: the letter *nun* does not appear, accounting for 21 verses instead of 22 if all the letters were represented, as in Ps. 34. The psalm is not marked by any clear-cut divisions; it is one and indivisible.

On the authorship of the psalm see MB 70. On the superscription see pp. 616, 628.

1. O king. David, the earthly king of Israel, adores God, who is his King. Happy is that land where the royal leader is loyal to the heavenly Monarch.

2. Every day. David's praise was not intermittent—not one day in seven, but every day; not for a brief span, but for all time. Our love to God and our praise to Him should be a daily matter. Every day God sends unnumbered blessings to His children, and there is every reason why we should praise Him daily.

Bless thee. See on Ps. 63:4.

3. Unsearchable. Not all the great intellects of all the centuries are sufficient to penetrate the depths of God's unfathomable riches of grace, glory, and power. God's glory and majesty are ineffable, His goodness and mercy universal and abundant.

4. One generation. Men shall hand down from father to son the account of God's mighty acts of deliverance. The Israelites took great pleasure in recounting the wonderful deliverances wrought by God on behalf of their forefathers in Egypt and at the Red Sea. One generation after another passes away, but praise and adoration to God continue.

5. Majesty. It is fitting that David, the king, should speak of the majesty of the King of kings. He has difficulty in finding language to express adequately the attributes of God.

7. Shall sing. God's righteousness should be the theme of the Christian's song. Singing is a fitting way to render praise to God. Our hearts and voices should be often uplifted to the heavenly King in holy hymns. Music's highest and sweetest strains assist us to exalt our Creator.

8. Gracious. Compare Ex. 34:6. As God revealed Himself to Moses and to David, so He reveals Himself to us today, as a God who is full of tender mercy and graciousness. He regards all with the tenderest sympathy, especially those passing through the valley of affliction.

Slow to anger. God has long patience with perverse sinners. His great desire is that they should repent and turn to Him (see Eze. 33:11). He suffers long and continues to plead with men to repent of their sinful ways. It pains His heart to give up any child of Adam. Through the prophet Hosea He asks the pathetic question: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" (Hosea 11:8).

9. Good to all. This verse brings to view the universality of God's goodness. God is impartial in His dealings with men. His sun shines and His rain falls on the evil and the good alike (Matt. 5:45).

10. Bless thee. See on Ps. 63:4.

12. Make known. The glorious deeds of God are to be declared to all the world, and this responsibility rests upon the saints. Those only are qualified to do this work who have experienced something of the power of God in their lives. The saints should be eager that others should understand and appreciate the mighty power of their Redeemer.

13. Everlasting kingdom. The Lord never abdicates His throne. Earthly kings and rulers may change, but the Ruler of the universe changeth not. The perpetuity of the kingdom of God stands out in contrast to the transitory nature of the kingdoms of this world (Dan. 2:44).

14. All that fall. Or, "all who are falling." The Lord is ready to sustain all those who are sinking beneath life's burdens or who are falling before temptation (see Matt. 11:28). He will uphold them if they call upon Him.

15. Season. God is pictured as the great Provider, distributing food to all whenever they need it. The Lord is the Good Shepherd, feeding His flock and leading them where the pasture is green and the waters are still (Ps. 23:2). Every creature in the universe is dependent upon Him. His resources are unlimited. He has ample provision for all.

16. Thine hand. The Lord provides with open hand not only man's physical necessities but liberal stores of grace for all who seek them. He is always on the giving side; His hand of grace is always open. He is able and willing to do exceeding abundantly above all that His children ask or think (Eph. 3:20).

17. Holy. Heb. *chasid* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

19. Fulfil the desire. Holy hearts will desire only what is holy, so God has no problem in fulfilling such desires. He does not promise to grant the desire of the sinner. It would not be wise or kind to do so.

Hear their cry. As the tender mother's love is drawn out toward the cry of her child, so the Lord's ear is ever attuned to hear the cries of His children.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3–21 MH 435; 8T 283
5, 6 MB 70
9 PP 443
10 GC 671
14 FE 305
14–16 MH 418; 8T 275
15, 16 SC 9
16 CG 59; Ed 118
17 PP 39
18 PP 125
20 GC 541

PSALM 146

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 146 is the first of the five Hallelujah psalms with which the book of Psalms closes. Its theme is a eulogy on the benefits of having God for a helper. The psalm warns against putting trust in man, however much power he may be wielding.

On the authorship of the psalm see GC 545.

1. Praise ye the Lord. Heb. *halelu–Yah*, transliterated "hallelujah." An expression that should be uttered with reverential and holy awe.

2. While I live. This mortal life is of short duration, but all its days should be spent in blessing and extolling the name of God. "Praise" is the theme of the anthems to God that are sung by the inhabitants of heaven. "Let us learn the song of the angels now, that we may sing it when we join their shining ranks" (PP 289). The songs of heaven will bring joy and strength to lighten the burdens of this life.

3. Princes. There is a more reliable Protector and Helper than even the most noble of earth. Though princes be of royal blood they are but human. God alone merits our complete trust and confidence. Without Him we are helpless before many of the problems of life (9T 203).

4. Thoughts. Heb. *'eshtonoth*, a word occurring only here. It comes from the verb *'ashath*, which occurs only twice, once in Jer. 5:28, translated "shine," and once in Jonah 1:6, with the meaning, "to give thought to." An Aramaic verb, *'ashith*, meaning, "to intend," "to plan," occurs once in Dan. 6:4. The translation "plans" (RSV) evidently comes from considering *'eshtoneth* to be based on the Aramaic *'ashith*. Such a relationship is doubtful, however, in the light of the Davidic authorship of the psalm (see GC 545). It appears more reasonable to consider *'eshtoneth* as from the Heb. *'ashath*, "to give thought to," and hence to retain the translation "thoughts." The LXX and the Vulgate support this translation.

Perish. That is, consciousness ceases. The Bible lends no support to the popular doctrine of a conscious state between death and the resurrection and furthermore emphatically refutes such a teaching (see Ps. 115:17; Eccl. 9:5). A common metaphor for death is "sleep" (Deut. 31:16; 2 Sam. 7:12; 1 Kings 11:43; Job 14:12; Dan. 12:2; John 11:11, 12; 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:13–17; etc.). That such a "sleep" is not a conscious fellowship with the Lord on the part of the righteous is clearly implied in the statement of Jesus, who comforted His disciples with the thought that at the second advent, not at death, the disciples would be united with their Lord (John 14:1–3). Paul similarly pointed to the second advent as the time when all the righteous, those living at the time of the advent, and the dead who will be raised at that moment, will together be united with Christ, with no precedence on the part of the living (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

5. The God of Jacob. What God did for Jacob He is able to do for us. We, too, may be overcomers—with God.

Hope. Hope is the balm of life and the joy of existence. It buoys our spirits up as we meet with trials and sorrows along the way.

6. Which made. In contrast with the weakness of humanity, God is the Creator of the vast universe. There is nothing too difficult for Him to accomplish. He will never fail in fulfilling His promises to His children.

Keepeth truth. Since God "keepeth truth," we need not fear to put our trust and confidence in Him. His word is true (Ps. 119:160), and He has promised to keep His word, not for a time, but forever.

7. Looseth the prisoners. Compare Isa. 61:1.

8. Openeth the eyes. Releasing from prison and opening blind eyes are coupled together by Isaiah as the work Christ was to perform (Isa. 42:7). He who made the

delicate mechanism of the eye knows just how to open it when it is blind. He also grants spiritual eyesight, that men may behold the things of the Spirit.

9. Fatherless. Compare Deut. 14:29.

Turneth upside down. God defeats the evil designs of the wicked.

10. Lord shall reign for ever. Unlike earthly princes, who in time pass away, God, the Great King, is ever on His throne. He never abdicates nor will he ever be deprived of His crown.

Praise ye the Lord. Heb. *halelu–Yah*, as in v. 1.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 GW 435
1–36T 108
2 PP 289; 5T 319
3 PK 596; 9T 203
3–5FE 222
4 COL 270; GC 545; PP 685
5 MH 417; PK 378

PSALM 147

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 147 is the second of the Hallelujah psalms. The psalmist ascribes praise to God for His goodness to His chosen people and for His blessings to the earth. The psalm consists of three divisions, each beginning with a call to renewed praise. Since God is healer, restorer, provider, and controller of all nature, the psalmist calls for universal praise. On the authorship of this psalm see FE 371.

1. Praise is comely. See on Ps. 33:1. Nothing is more appropriate than for man, who owes so much to God, to show gratitude to the Lord. And yet how few, even among the professed followers of Jesus, show true gratitude.

3. Healeth. God is the Great Physician of the soul and is touched by every pang that rends the heart. "Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice" (SC 105).

4. Telleth. Rather, "counts," or, "enumerates," the heavenly bodies. The great advances of modern astronomy reveal the futility of man's ever being able to penetrate to the limits of the universe, if, indeed, such there be. New and larger telescopes capable of reaching farther into space reveal only more stars and systems.

The number. See on v. 5. What wisdom and power are displayed in marshaling the countless hosts of stars and in guiding and keeping them in their particular spheres.

Names. See Isa. 40:26.

5. Infinite. Heb. *'en mispar*, "without number." *Mispar* is translated "number" in v. 4. It is impossible to calculate the unfathomable depth of God's knowledge. There is a limit to human knowledge, but there is no searching out of God's understanding.

6. Lifteth up the meek. He who controls the mighty suns in their orbits stoops to sustain those who are of a humble spirit. What condescension!

7. Harp. Heb. *kinnor*, lyre (see p. 34).

8. Who prepareth rain. All growing things are dependent upon God for rain, sunshine, and life itself (see Ed 104).

9. Young ravens. Compare Matt. 6:26; Luke 12:6, 7.

10. Strength of the horse. In contrast with the heathen nations around, Israel was not to depend on horses or chariots in warfare (see on Deut. 17:16). The Lord has a thousand ways of accomplishing His plans and does not need to depend on any of His creatures to assist Him.

11. Fear him. See on Ps. 19:9; Prov. 1:7.

13. He hath strengthened. God's protection is the best defense of any country. Without it other defenses are vain (see Ps. 127:1).

14. In thy borders. From a military standpoint the frontier towns lie most exposed. If there is peace on the perimeter of a territory, there is usually peace throughout the land.

The finest of the wheat. Literally, "the fat of the wheat," meaning "choice wheat." God desires to give His people the choice material blessings as well as spiritual.

15. His commandment. The earth, as well as those who dwell therein, is subject to the commands of God.

17. Morsels. Heb. *pittim*, here used metaphorically of hail.

19. Sheweth. Heb. *nagad*. The form used here means "to place a matter conspicuously before a person."

20. Not dealt so. Compare Rom. 9:4, 5.

Praise ye the Lord. The psalm concludes with a "hallelujah" (see on Ps. 146:1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 DA 329; PK 668; SC 105
3, 4 MH 71; ML 297; Te 120
3–7FE 371
4 DA 329
5 MH 433; 8T 282
8 CT 185; MM 7; PP 115
11, 12 FE 371
16 MH 416; PP 115; 8T 270

PSALM 148

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 148 is the third of the Hallelujah psalms (see Introduction to Ps. 146). Not only heavenly beings, but, poetically, the heavenly bodies themselves are invited to join in praising God. The psalmist extends the invitation to every living creature on earth and to inanimate nature. No one is left out of this universal call to ascribe praise to the Creator and Sustainer of all things.

The psalm consists of two parts: (1) The praise of God in heaven (vs. 1–6), (2) the praise of God on earth (vs. 7–14).

On the authorship of the psalm see FE 371.

2. All his angels. See Ps. 103:20, 21.

All his hosts. See on Ps. 24:10.

3. Stars of light. Poetically the stars, the sun, and the moon are called upon to ascribe praise to God.

4. Heavens of heavens. Idiomatic for the highest heavens.

Above the heavens. Compare Gen. 1:7.

5. Let them praise. See on v. 3.

6. Stablished them. The heavenly bodies owe their stability and permanence to the omnipotent will of God, their Sustainer.

Decree. Heb. *choq*, "something prescribed." *Choq* may also mean "bounds," or "limit," as in Jer. 5:22, and the psalmist may be referring to the fact that God has marked out the orbits in which the heavenly bodies move. They perform their revolutions with unerring accuracy within the bounds that He has prescribed.

7. Dragons. See on Deut. 32:33; Job 30:29. The summons must be understood poetically.

8. Fire. Presumably a reference to lightning, as in Ps. 18:12; 105:32.

9. Fruitful trees. The summons extends to the plant kingdom.

10. Beasts. Heb. *chayyah*, "wild animals."

Cattle. Heb. *behemah*, "domestic animals." The summons extends to the animal kingdom.

11. All people. The psalmist places mankind last, perhaps as representing the crowning work of creation as far as this earth is concerned.

12. Young men. A subclassification of the human family emphasizing the comprehensiveness of the summons to praise. Everyone of whatever age or station, whether high or low, young or old, should praise the Lord.

14. Exalteth the horn. An expression denoting increase of power and strength (see Deut. 33:17; 1 Sam. 2:1, 10; Ps. 18:2; etc.).

Praise ye the Lord. Like Ps. 146, 147, this psalm closes with a "hallelujah" (see on Ps. 146:1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–36T 109
5, 6 MH 416
8 PP 509

PSALM 149

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 149 is the fourth of the Hallelujah psalms (see Introduction to Ps. 146). The tone of the psalm is jubilant and joyful. On the authorship of the psalm, see FE 371.

1. New song. God desires His saints to renew their spiritual experience day by day (see Luke 9:23; 2 Cor. 4:16). With each renewed consecration should come a new song. Inasmuch as God's mercies are new to us every morning, our gratitude and thanksgiving should be new also.

Saints. Heb. *chasidim* (see Additional Note on Ps. 36).

3. In the dance. The sacred dance of holy joy was a thing apart from the frivolous or debasing dances of the present day (see on 2 Sam. 6:14).

The timbrel. A small hand drum (see p. 30).

5. Sing aloud. Heb. *ranan*, "to give a ringing cry of joy." The vigor of the language indicates the strength of David's convictions in this matter.

6. Twoedged sword. On vs. 6–9 see Additional Note on Joshua 6; see also on 2 Chron. 22:8; Ps. 44:9.

9. Praise ye the Lord. The psalm closes with another "hallelujah" (see v. 1; see on Ps. 146:1, 10; 147:20; 148:14).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4 MB 32; ML 253; SL 13

PSALM 150

INTRODUCTION.—Ps. 150 is the final of the Hallelujah psalms. It is the great closing Hallelujah, or Doxology, of the Psalter. Thus the book of Psalms concludes with a call for everything that has breath to join in the great anthem of praise.

On the authorship of Ps. 150, see FE 371.

1. Firmament of his power. As in Ps. 148, the summons to praise extends to the dwellers of both heaven and earth.

3. Trumpet. Heb. *shophar*, horn (see p. 39).

Psaltery. Heb. *nebel*, harp (see p. 33).

Harp. Heb. *kinnor*, lyre (see p. 34).

4. Timbrel. Heb. *toph*, a small type of hand drum (see p. 30).

Stringed instruments. Heb. *minnim* (see p. 41; see on Ps. 45:8).

Organs. Heb. *'ugab*, flute (see p. 38; see on Gen. 4:20).

5. Cymbals. Heb. *ṣilṣelim* (see p. 30).

High sounding. Heb. *teru'ah*, "piercing."

6. Praise ye the Lord. With one final grand "hallelujah" (see on Ps. 146:1) the greatest book of songs ever composed, closes. In the great audience chamber of the psalms, where our hearts have thrilled with many soul-stirring choruses, we rise and stand in reverence as the great symphony reaches its climax. We would fain join our voices in the last great "hallelujah" to the Lamb.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

6 5T 315
[25]

[25]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ps 142:5). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.